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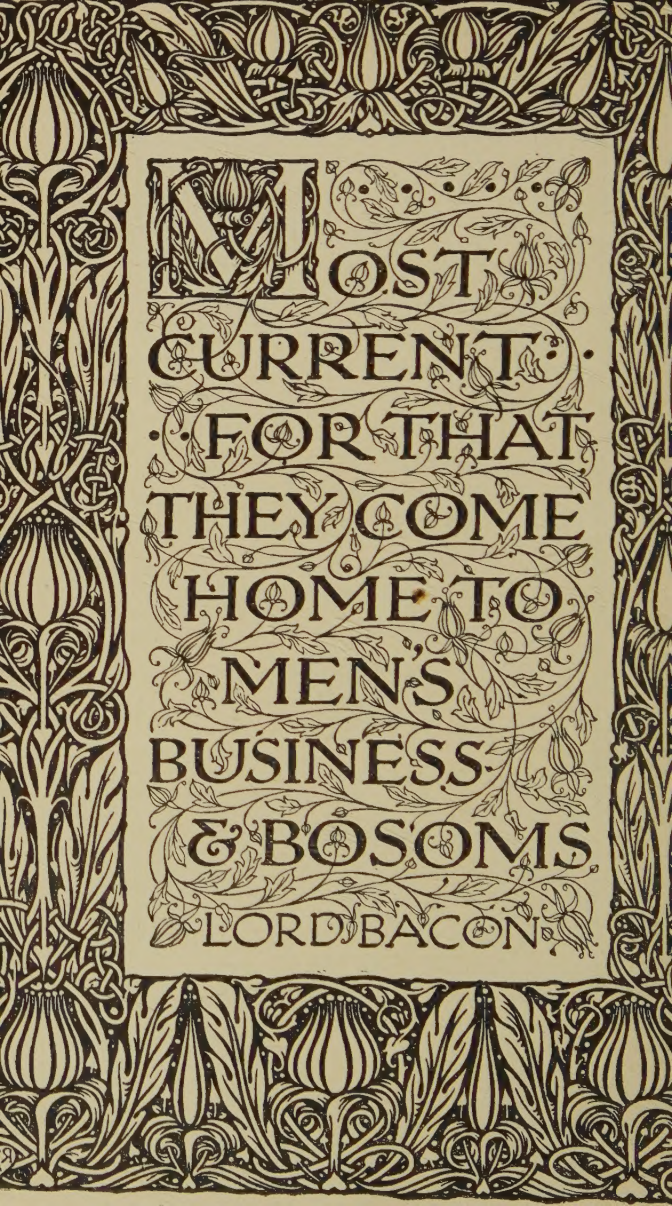
MOST
CURRENT
FOR THAT
THEY COME
HOME TO
MEN'S
BUSINESS
& BOSOMS
LORD BACON

# ESSAYS IN LITERATURE & HISTORY

by J. A. FROUDE

EVERY MAN I WILL GO WITH THEE BE THY GVIDE

IN THY MOST NEED TO GO BY THY SIDE

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# CONTENTS

PAGE

INTRODUCTION . . . . . ix

ARNOLD'S POEMS . . . . . 1

(*Westminster Review*, 1854.)

WORDS ABOUT OXFORD . . . . . 20

(*Fraser's Magazine*, 1850.)

ENGLAND'S FORGOTTEN WORTHIES . . . . 34

(*Westminster Review*, 1852.)

THE BOOK OF JOB . . . . . 81

(*Westminster Review*, 1853.)

THE LIVES OF THE SAINTS . . . . . 126

(*Eclectic Review*, 1852.)

THE DISSOLUTION OF THE MONASTERIES . . 149

(*Fraser's Magazine*, 1857.)

THE PHILOSOPHY OF CHRISTIANITY . . . . 184

(*The Leader*, 1851.)

PAGE

A Plea for the Free Discussion of Theological Difficulties . . . . . 195

(*Fraser's Magazine*, 1863.)

Spinoza . . . . . 224

(*Westminster Review*, 1855.)

Reynard the Fox . . . . . 273

(*Fraser's Magazine*, 1852.)

The Commonplace Book of Richard Hilles . 294

(*Fraser's Magazine*, 1858.)

# INTRODUCTION

FROUDE had this merit—a merit he shared with Huxley alone of his contemporaries—that he imposed his convictions. He fought against resistance. He excited (and still excites) a violent animosity. He exasperated the surface of his time and was yet too strong for that surface to reject him. This combative and aggressive quality in him, which was successful in that it was permanent and never suffered a final defeat, should arrest any one who may make a general survey of the last generation in letters.

It was a period with a vice of its own which yet remains to be detected and chastised. In one epoch lubricity, in another fanaticism, in a third dulness and a dead-alive copying of the past, are the faults which criticism finds to attack. None of these affected the Victorian era. It was pure—though tainted with a profound hypocrisy; it was singularly free from violence in its judgments; it was certainly alive and new: but it had this grievous defect (a defect under which we still labour heavily), that thought was restrained upon every side. Never in the history of European letters was it so difficult for a man to say what he would and to be heard. A sort of cohesive public spirit (which was but one aspect of the admirable homogeneity of the nation) glued and immobilised all individual expression. One could float imprisoned as in a stream of thick substance: one could not swim against it.

It is to be carefully discerned how many apparent exceptions to this truth are, if they be closely examined, no exceptions at all. A whole series of national defects were exposed and ridiculed in the literature as in the oratory of that day; but they were defects which the mass of men secretly delighted to hear denounced and of which each believed himself to be free.

They loved to be told that they were of a gross taste in art, for they connected such a taste vaguely with high morals and with successful commerce. There was no surer way to a large sale than to start a revolution in appreciation every five years, and from Ruskin to Oscar Wilde a whole series of Prophets attained eminence and fortune by telling men how something new and as yet unknown was Beauty and something just past was to be rejected, and how they alone saw truth while the herd around them were blind. But no one showed us how to model, nor did any one remark that we alone of all Europe had preserved a school of water-colour.

So in politics our blunders were a constant theme ; but no one marked with citation, document, and proof the glaring progress of corruption, or that, for all our enthusiasm, we never once in that generation defended the oppressed against the oppressor. There was a vast if unrecognised conspiracy, by which whatever might have prevented those extreme evils from which we now suffer was destroyed as it appeared. Efforts at a thorough purge were dull, were libellous, were not of the "form" which the Universities and the public schools taught to be sacred. They were rejected as unreadable, or if printed, were unread. The results are with us to-day.

In such a time Froude maintained an opposing force, which was not reforming nor constructive in any way, but which will obtain the attention of the future historian, simply because it *was* an opposition.

It was an opposition of manner rather than of matter. The matter of it was common enough even in Froude's chief decade of power. The cause to which he gave allegiance was already winning when he proceeded to champion it, and many a better man, one or two greater men, were saying the same things as he ; but *they* said such things in a fashion that suggested no violent effort nor any demand for resistance : it was the peculiar virtue of Froude that he touched nothing without the virile note of a challenge sounding throughout his prose. On this account, though he will convince our posterity even less than he does ourselves, the words of persuasion, the writings themselves will remain : for

he chose the hardest wood in which to chisel, knowing the strength of his hand.

What was it in him which gave him that strength, and which permitted him, in an age that would tolerate no formative grasp upon itself, to achieve a permanent fame? I will not reply to this question by pointing to the popularity of his History of England; the essays that follow will afford sufficient material to answer it. He produced the effect he did and remained in the eminence to which he had climbed, first because his manner of thought was rigid and of a hard edge; secondly, because he could use that steel tool of a brain in a fashion that was general; he could use it upon subjects and with a handling that was comprehensible to great masses of his fellow-countrymen.

It is not certain that such a man with such interests would have made his voice heard in any other society. It is doubtful whether he will be translated with profit. His field was very small, the points of his attack might all be found contained in one suburban villa. But in our society his grip and his intensity did fall, and fall of choice, upon such matters as his contemporaries either debated or were ready to debate. He therefore did the considerable thing we know him to have done.

I say that his mind was rigid and of a close fibre: it was a mind (to repeat the metaphor) out of which a strong graving-tool could be forged. Its blade would not be blunted: it could deal with its material. Of this character, which I take to be the first essential in his achievement, the few essays before us preserve an ample evidence.

Thus you will find throughout their pages the presence of that dogmatic assertion which invariably proceeds from such a mind, and coupled with such assertion is a continual consciousness that his dogmas *are* dogmas: that he is asserting unprovable things and laying down his axioms before he begins his process of reasoning.

The contrary might be objected by some foreign observer, or by some one who had a larger acquaintance with European history than had he. I can imagine a French or an Irish critic pointing to a mass of assertion with no corresponding

admission that it is assertion only : such a critic might quote even from these few pages phrase after phrase in which Froude poses as certain what are still largely matters of debate. Thus upon page 144 he takes it for granted that no miracles have been worked by contact with the bodies of saints. He takes it for granted on page 161 that the checking of monastic disorders, and the use of strong language in connection with them, was peculiar to the generation which saw at its close the dissolution of the monasteries. He takes it for granted on page 125 that what we call "manifestations" or what not,—spirit rappings, table-turnings, and the rest—are deceptions of the senses to which superstition alone would give credence.

He ridicules (upon p. 128) the tradition of St. Patrick which all modern research has come to accept. He says downright (upon pp. 186–187) that the Ancient world did not inquire into the problem of evil. On p. 214 he will have it that the ordinary man rejects, "without hesitation," the interference of will with material causes. In other words, he asserts that the ordinary man is a fatalist—for Froude knew very well that between the fatalist and the believer in a possibility of miracle there is no conceivable position. He will have it (on p. 216) that a modern doctor always regards a "vision" as an hallucination. On p. 217 he denies by implication the stigmata of St. Francis—and so forth—one might multiply the instances indefinitely. All Froude's works are full of them, they are part and parcel of his method—but their number is to no purport. One example may stand for all, and their special value to our purpose is not that they are mere assertions, but that they are assertions which Froude must have known to be personal, disputable, and dogmatic.

He knew very well that the vast majority of mankind accepted the virtue of relics, that intellects the equals of his own rejected that determinism to which he was bound, and that the Pagan world might be presented in a fashion very different from his own. And in that perpetual—often gratuitous—affirmation you have no sign of limitation in him but rather of eagerness for battle.

It is an admirable fault or perhaps no fault at all, or if a

fault an appendage to the most considerable virtue a writer of his day could have had : the virtue of courage.

See how he thrusts when he comes to lay down the law, not upon what the narrow experience of readers understands and agrees with him about, but upon some matter which he knows them to have decided in a manner opposed to his own. See how definite, how downright, and how clean are the sentences in which he asserts that Christianity is Catholic or nothing :—

" . . . This was the body of death which philosophy detected but could not explain, and from which *Catholicism* now came forward with its magnificent promise of deliverance.

" The carnal doctrine of the sacraments, which they are compelled to acknowledge to have been taught as fully in the early Church as it is now taught by the Roman Catholics, has long been the stumbling-block to Protestants. It was the very essence of Christianity itself. Unless the body could be purified, the soul could not be saved ; or, rather, as from the beginning, soul and flesh were one man and inseparable, without his flesh, man was lost, or would cease to be. But the natural organization of the flesh was infected, and unless organization could begin again from a new original, no pure material substance could exist at all. He, therefore, by whom God had first made the world, entered into the womb of the Virgin in the form (so to speak) of a new organic cell, and around it, through the virtue of His creative energy, a material body grew again of the substance of His mother, pure of taint and clean as the first body of the first man when it passed out under His hand in the beginning of all things."

Throughout his essay on the Philosophy of Christianity, where he was maintaining a thesis odious to the majority of his readers, he rings as hard as ever. The philosophy of Christianity is frankly declared to be Catholicism and Catholicism alone ; the truth of Christianity is denied. It is called a thing " worn and old " even in Luther's time (upon page 194), and he definitely prophesies a period when " our posterity " shall learn " to despise the miserable fabric which Luther stitched together out of its tatters."

His judgments are short, violent, compressed. They are

not the judgments of balance. They are final not as a goal reached is final, but as a death-wound delivered. He throws out sentences which all the world can see to be insufficient and thin, but whose sharpness is the sharpness of conviction and of a striving determination to achieve conviction in others —or if he fails in that, at least to leave an enemy smarting. Everywhere you have up and down his prose those short parentheses, those side sentences, which are strokes of offence. Thus on page 199, "We hear—or we used to hear *when the High Church party were more formidable than they are*," &c.; or again, on page 210, "The Bishop of Natal" (Colenso) has done such and such things, "coupled with certain arithmetical calculations *for which he has a special aptitude*." There are dozens of these in every book he wrote. They wounded, and were intended to wound.

His intellect may therefore be compared, as I have compared it, to an instrument or a weapon of steel, to a chisel or a sword. It was hard, polished, keen, stronger than what it bit into, and of its nature enduring. This was the first of the characters that gave him his secure place in English letters.

The second is his universality—the word is not over-exact, but I can find no other. I mean that Froude was the exact opposite of the sciolist and was even other than the student. He was kneaded right into his own time and his own people. The arena in which he fought was small, the ideas he combated were few. He was not universal as those are universal who appeal to any man in any country. But he was eager upon these problems which his contemporaries wrangled over. He was in tune with, even when he directly opposed, the class from which he sprang, the mass of well-to-do Protestant Englishmen of Queen Victoria's reign. Their furniture had nothing shocking for him nor their steel engravings. He took for granted their probity, their common sense, and their reading. He knew what they were thinking about, and therefore all he did to praise or blame their convictions, to soothe or to exasperate them, told. He could see the target.

Perpetually this looking at the world from the standpoint

of the men around him makes him say things that irritate more particular and more acute minds than his own, but I will maintain that in his case the fault was a necessary fault and went with a power which permitted him to achieve the sympathy which he did achieve. He talks of the "Celt" and the "Saxon," and ascribes what he calls "our failures in Ireland" to the "incongruity of character" between these two imaginaries. He takes it for granted that "we are something which divides us from mediæval Christianity by an impassable gulf." When he speaks of asceticism he must quote "the hair shirt of Thomas à Becket." If he is speaking of Oxford undergraduates one has "pleasant faces, cheerful voices, and animal spirits," and at the end of the fine but partial essay on Spinoza we have six lines which might come bodily from a leader in the *Daily Telegraph*, or from any copy of the *Spectator* picked up at random.

These are grave faults, but, I repeat, they are the faults of those great qualities which gave him his position.

And side by side with such faults go an exceptional lucidity, a good order within the paragraph and in the succession of the paragraphs. A choice of subject suited to his audience, an excision of that which would have bored or bewildered it, a vividness of description wherewith to amuse and a directness of conclusion wherewith to arrest his readers —all these he had, beyond perhaps any of his contemporaries.

Occasionally that brotherhood in him leads him to faults more serious. You get gross commonplace and utterly false commonplace, of which when he came back to them (if indeed he was a man who read his own works) he must have been ashamed :—

"Persecutions come, and martyrdoms, and religious wars ; and, at last, the old faith, like the phœnix, expires upon its altar, and the new rises out of the ashes.

"Such, in briefest outline, has been the history of religions, natural and moral."

Or again, of poor old Oxford :—

"The increase of knowledge, and consequently of morality, is the great aim of such a noble establishment as this ; and the rewards and honours dispensed there are bestowed in

proportion to the industry and good conduct of those who receive them."

But the interesting point about these very lapses is that they remain purely exceptional. They do not affect either the tone of his writing or the value and intricacy of his argument. They may be compared to those undignified and valueless chips of conversational English that pop up in the best rhetoric if it be the rhetoric of an enthusiastic and wide man.

While, however, one is in the mood of criticism it is not unjust to show what other lapses in him are connected with this common sympathy of his and this very comprehension of his class to which he owed his opportunity and his effect.

Thus he is either so careless or so hurried as to use—much too commonly—words which have lost all vitality, and which are for the most part meaningless, but which go the rounds still like shining flat sixpences worn smooth. The word "practical" drops from his pen; he quotes "in a glass darkly," and speaks of "a picture of human life"; the walls of Oxford are "time-hallowed"; he enters a church and finds in it "a dim religious light"; a man of Froude's capacity has no right to find such a thing there. If he writes the word "sin" the word "shame" comes tripping after. It may be that he was a man readily caught by fatigue, or it may be, it is more probable, that he thought it small millinery to "travailler le verbe." At any rate the result as a whole hangs to his identity of spirit with the thousands for whom he wrote.

To this character of universality attach also faults not only in his occasional choice of words but in his general style.

The word "style" has been so grossly abused during the last thirty years that one mentions it with diffidence. Matthew Arnold well said that when people came to him and asked to be told how to write a good style he was unable to reply; for indeed it is not a thing to be taught. It is a by-product, though a necessary by-product, of good thinking. But when Matthew Arnold went on to say that there was no such thing as style except knowing clearly what you wanted to say, and

saying it as clearly as you could, he was talking nonsense. There is such a thing as style. It is that combination of rhythm, lucidity, and emphasis, which certainly must not be consciously produced, but which if it arise naturally from a man's pen and from his method of thought makes all the difference between what is readable and what is not readable. If any one doubt this let him compare the French Bible with the English—both literal and lucid translations of the same original; or again let him contrast the prose phrases of Milton when he is dealing with the claims of the Church in the Middle Ages with those of Mr. Bryce in the same connection.

Now I say that just as the excellences of Froude's prose proceeded from this universality of his so did the errors into which that prose fell, and it is remarkable that these errors are slips of detail. They proceed undoubtedly from rapid writing and from coupling his scholarship with a very general and ephemeral reading.

A few examples drawn from these essays will prove what I mean. On the very first page, in the first line of the second paragraph we have the word "often" coming after the word "experience," instead of before it. He had written "experience," he desired to qualify it, and he did not go back to do what should always be done in plain English, and what indeed distinguishes plain English from almost every other language—to put the qualification before the thing qualified; a peculiarly English mark in this, that it presupposes one's having thought the whole thing out before writing it down.

On page 3 we have exactly the same thing; "A legend not known unfortunately to general English readers." He means of course, "unfortunately not known," but as the sentence stands it reads as though he had meant to say, somewhat clumsily, that the method in which English readers knew the legend was not unfortunate.

He is again careless in the matter of repetitions, both of the same word, and (what is a better test of ear) of rhymes within the sentence: we have in one place "which seemed *to* give a soul *to* those splendid donations *to* learning," and further on in the same page "a priority in mortality."

On pages 34 and 35 you have "an intensely *real* conviction." You are then told that "the most lawless men did then *really* believe." Then that the American tribes were in the eyes of the colonists "*real* worshippers" of the Devil, and a few lines later we hear of "the *real* awfulness of the world."

The position of the relative is often as slipshod as the position of the qualicative; thus you will find upon page 37 that the pioneers "graved out the channels, and at last paved them with their bones, through which the commerce and enterprise of England *has* flowed out of all the world." This sentence is quite deplorable; it has a singular verb after two nominatives, and is so framed that one might imagine the commerce and enterprise of our beloved country to have flown through those hollow interior channels, with which, I believe, our larger bones are provided, and in which is to be discovered that very excellent substance, marrow.

It is singular that, while these obvious errors have excited so little comment, Froude should have been blamed so often and by such different authorities for weaknesses of the pen from which he did not suffer, or which, if he did suffer from them, at least he had in common with every other writer of our time and perhaps less than most.

Thus, as an historian he has been accused of two faults which have been supposed by those who are ill acquainted with the history of letters to be correlative: a straining for effect and an inaccuracy of detail. There is not one of his contemporaries who less forced himself in description than Froude. Often in Green, very often in Freeman and always in Carlyle you feel that your author is deliberately exciting his mind and your own. Violent colours are chosen and peculiar emphasis—from this Froude was free. He was an historian.

To the end Froude remained an historian, and an historian he was born. If we regret that his history was not general, and that he turned his powers upon such a restricted set of phenomena, still we must rejoice that there was once in modern England a man who could sum up the nature of a great movement. He lacked the power of integration.

He was not an artist. But he possessed to an extraordinary degree the power of synthesis. He was a craftsman, as the modern jargon goes. There is not in the whole range of English literature as excellent a summary of the way in which the Divinity of our Lord fought its way into the leading brains of Europe, as appears upon page 192 of this book. It is as good as Boissier; there runs all through it knowledge, proportion, and something which, had he been granted a little more light, or been nurtured in an intellectual climate a little more sunny, would have been vision itself:—

"The being who accomplished a work so vast, a work compared to which the first creation appears but a trifling difficulty, what could He be but God? Who but God could have wrested His prize from a power which half the thinking world believed to be His coequal and co-eternal adversary? He was God. He was man also, for He was the second Adam—the second starting-point of human growth. He was virgin born, that no original impurity might infect the substance which He assumed; and being Himself sinless, He showed in the nature of His person after His resurrection, what the material body would have been in all of us except for sin, and what it will be when, after feeding on it in its purity, the bodies of each of us are transfigured after its likeness."

There's a piece of historical prose which summarises, teaches, and stamps itself finally upon the mind! Froude saw that the Faith was the summit and the completion of Rome. Had he written us a summary of the fourth and fifth centuries—and had he written it just after reading some dull fellow on the other side—what books we should have had to show to the rival schools of the Continent!

Consider the sharp and almost unique judgment passed upon Tacitus at the bottom of page 133 and the top of page 134, or again, the excellent sub-ironic passages in which he expresses the vast advantage of metaphysical debate: which has all these qualities, that it is true, sober, exact, and yet a piece of laughter and a contradiction of itself. It is prose in three dimensions.

That pedantic charge of inaccuracy, with which I have

already dealt in another place, in connection with another and perhaps a greater man, is not applicable to Froude. He was hasty, and in his historical work the result certainly was that he put down things upon insufficient evidence, or upon evidence but half read ; but even in his historical work (which dealt, remember, with the most highly controversial part of English history) he is as accurate as anybody else, except perhaps Lingard. That the man was by nature accurate, well read and of a good memory, appears continually throughout this book, and the more widely one has read one's self, the more one appreciates this truth.

For instance, there is often set down to Disraeli the remark that his religion was "the religion of all sensible men," and upon being asked what this religion might be, that Oriental is said to have replied, "All sensible men keep that to themselves." Now Disraeli could no more have made such a witticism than he could have flown through the air; his mind was far too extravagant for such pointed phrases. Froude quotes the story (page 205 of this book) but rightly ascribes it to Rogers, a very different man from Disraeli—an Englishman with a mastery of the English language.

Look again at this remark upon page 20, "The happy allusion of Quevedo to the Tiber was not out of place here : 'the fugitive is alone permanent.'" How many Englishmen know that Du Bellay's immortal sonnet was but a translation of Quevedo? You could drag all Oxford and Cambridge to-day and not find a single man who knew it.

Note the care he has shown in quoting one of those hackneyed phrases which almost all the world misquotes, "Que mon nom soit flétri, *pourvu* que la France soit libre." Of a hundred times that you may see those words of Danton's written down, you will perhaps not see them once written down exactly as they were said.

So it is throughout his work. Men still living in the Universities accuse him vaguely of inexactitude as they will accuse Jowett of ignorance, and these men, when one examines them closely, are found to be ignorant of the French language, to have read no philosophy between Aristotle and Hobbes, and to issue above their signatures such errors of

plain dates and names as make one blush for English scholarship and be glad that no foreigner takes our historical school seriously.

. . . . . .

There is always left to any man who deals with the writings of Froude, a task impossible to complete but necessarily to be attempted. He put himself forward, in a set attitude, to combat and to destroy what he conceived to be—in the moment of his attack—the creed of his countrymen. He was so literary a man that he did this as much by accepting as by denying, as much by dating from Elizabeth all we are as by affirming unalterable material sequence and the falsity of every transcendental acceptation. His time smelt him out even when he flattered it most. Even when he wrote of the *Revenge* the England of his day—luckily for him—thought him an enemy.

Upon the main discussion of his life it is impossible to pass a judgment, for the elements of that discussion are now destroyed; the universities no longer pretend to believe. And "free discussion" has become so free that the main doctrines he assailed are no longer presented or read without weariness in the class to which he appealed and from which he sprang.

The sects, then, against which he set himself are dead: but upon a much larger question which is permanent, and which in a sort of groping way he sometimes handled, something should be said here, which I think has never been said before. He was perpetually upon the borderland of the Catholic Church.

Between him and the Faith there stood no distance of space, but rather a high thin wall; the high thin wall of his own desperate conviction. If you will turn to page 209 of this book you will see it said of the denial of the Sacrament by the Reformers and of Ridley's dogma that it was bread only "the commonsense of the country was of the same opinion, and *the illusion was at an end.*" Froude knew that the illusion was not at an end. He *probably* knew (for we must continue to repeat that he was a most excellent historian) that the "commonsense of the country" was, by the time

Ridley and the New English Church began denying the real presence, and turning that denial into a dogma, profoundly indifferent to all dogmas whatsoever. What "the commonsense of the country" wanted was to keep out swarthy men, chivalrous indeed but imperialists full of gold who owned nearly all the earth, but who, they were determined, should not own England.

Froude was fond of such assertions, his book is full of them, and they are more than mere violence framed for combat; they are in their curious way definite expressions of the man's soul; for Froude was fond of that high thin wall, and liked to build it higher. He was a dogmatic rationalist—one hesitates to use a word which has been so portentously misused. Renan before dying came out with one of his last dogmas; it was to this effect, that there was not in the Universe an intelligent power higher than the human mind. Froude, had he lived in an atmosphere of perfectly free discussion as Renan did, would have heartily subscribed to that dogma.

Why then do I say that he was perpetually on the borderland of the Catholic Church? Because when he leaves for a moment the phraseology and the material of his youth and of his neighbourhood, he is perpetually striking that note of interest, of wonder, and of intellectual freedom which is the note of Catholicism.

Let any man who knows what Catholicism may be read carefully the Essay on the Dissolution of the Monasteries, and the Essay on the Philosophy of Christianity which succeeds it in this book, but which was written six years before. Let him remember that nothing Froude ever wrote was written without the desire to combat some enemy, and, having made allowance for that desire, let him decide whether one shock, one experience, one revelation would not have whirled him into the Church. He was, I think, like a man who has felt the hands of a woman and heard her voice, who knows them so thoroughly well that he can love, criticise, or despise according to his mood; but who has never seen her face.

And he was especially near to the Church in this: that having discussed a truth he was compelled to fight for it and

to wound actively in fighting. He was an agent. He did. He saw that the mass of stuff clinging round the mind of wealthy England was decaying. He turned with regret towards the healthy visions of Europe and called them illusions because they were not provable, and because all *provable* things showed a face other than that of the creed and were true in another manner. He despised the cowardice —for it is cowardice—that pretends to intellectual conviction and to temporal evidence of the things of the soul. He saw and said, and he was right in saying, that the City of God is built upon things incredible.

"*Incredibilia: nec crederim, nisi me compelleret ecclesiae auctoritas.*"

H. BELLOC.

THE following is a list of the published works of J. A. Froude. "Life of St. Neot" ("Lives of the English Saints," edited by J. H. Newman), 1844. "Shadows of the Clouds" (Tales), by Zeta (*pseud.*), 1847. "A Sermon (on 2 Cor. vii. 10) preached at St. Mary's Church on the Death of the Rev. George May Coleridge," 1847. Article on "Spinoza" (*Oxford and Cambridge Review*), 1847. "The Nemesis of Faith" (Tale), 1849. "England's Forgotten Worthies" (*Westminster Review*), 1852. "Book of Job" (*Westminster Review*), 1853. "Poems of Matthew Arnold" (*Westminster Review*), 1854. "Suggestions on the Best Means of Teaching English History" ("Oxford Essays," &c.), 1855. "History of England," 12 vols., 1856–70. "The Influence of the Reformation on the Scottish Character," 1865. "Inaugural Address delivered to the University of St. Andrews, March 19, 1869," 1869. "Short Studies on Great Subjects," 1867, 2 vols., series 2–4, 1871–83 (articles from *Fraser's Magazine*, *Westminster Review*, &c.). "The Cat's Pilgrimage," 1870. "Calvinism: Address at St. Andrews," 1871. "The English in Ireland," 3 vols., 1872–74. "Bunyan" ("English Men of Letters"), 1878. "Cæsar: a Sketch," 1879. "Two Lectures on South Africa," 1880. "Thomas Carlyle" (a history of the first forty years of his life, &c.), 2 vols., 1882. "Luther: a Short Biography," 1883. "Thomas Carlyle" (a history of his life in London, 1834–81), 2 vols., 1884. "Oceana," 1886. "The English in the West Indies," 1888. "Liberty and Property: an Address" [1888.] "The Two Chiefs of Dunboy," 1889. "Lord Beaconsfield" (a Biography), 1890. "The Divorce of Catherine of Aragon," 1891. "The Spanish Story of the Armada," 1892. "Life and Letters of Erasmus," 1894. "English Seamen in the Sixteenth Century," 1895. "Lectures on the Council of Trent," 1896. "My Relations with Carlyle," 1903.

Edited—"Carlyle's Reminiscences," 1881. "Mrs. Carlyle's Letters," 1883.

# ESSAYS ON LITERATURE AND HISTORY

## ARNOLD'S POEMS

FIVE years ago there appeared a small volume entitled "The Strayed Reveller, and other Poems, by A."[1] It was received we believe with general indifference. The public are seldom sanguine with new poets; the exceptions to the rule having been for the most part signal mistakes; while in the case of "A." the inequality of merit in his poems was so striking that even persons who were satisfied that qualities were displayed in them of the very highest kind, were yet unable to feel confidence in the future of an author so unusually incapable, as it appeared, of knowing when he was doing well and when he was failing.

Young men of talent experience often certain musical sensations, which are related to poetry as the fancy of a boy for a pretty face is related to love; and the counterfeit while it lasts is so like the reality as to deceive not only themselves but even experienced lookers-on who are not on their guard against the phenomenon. Time in either case is requisite to test the quality both of the substance and of the feeling, and we desired some further evidence of A.'s powers before we could grant

[1] *The Strayed Reveller, and other Poems.* By A. London: 1849.

him his rank as a poet; or even feel assured that he could ultimately obtain it. There was passion, as in a little poem called "Stagyrus," deep and searching; there was unaffected natural feeling, expressed sweetly and musically; in "The Sick King of Bokhara," in several of the Sonnets and other fragmentary pieces, there was genuine insight into life and whatever is best and noblest in it;—but along with this, there was often an elaborate obscurity, one of the worst faults which poetry can have; and indications that the intellectual struggles which, like all young men in our times, he was passing through, were likely to issue in an indifferentism neither pleasing nor promising.

The inequality in substance was not more remarkable than the inequality in the mechanical expression of it. "The Forsaken Merman" is perhaps as beautifully finished as anything of the kind in the English language. The story is exquisitely told, and word and metre so carefully chosen that the harmony of sound and meaning is perfect. The legend itself we believe is Norwegian. It is of a King of the Sea who had married an earthly maiden; and was at last deserted by her from some scruples of conscience. The original features of it are strictly preserved, and it is told indirectly by the old Sea King to his children in a wild, irregular melody, of which the following extract will convey but an imperfect idea. It is Easter time, and the mother has left her sea palace for the church on the hill side, with a promise to return—

"She smiled, she went up through the surf in the bay.
'Children, dear, was it yesterday?
Children, dear, were we long alone?'
'The sea grows stormy, the little ones moan.'
'Long prayers,' I said, 'in the world they say.
Come,' I said, 'and we rose through the surf in the bay.
We went up the beach, by the sandy down,
Where the sea-stocks bloom to the white-walled town,
Through the narrow paved streets where all was still,
To the little gray church on the windy hill.
From the church came a murmur of folk at their prayers;
But we stood without in the cold blowing airs.

We climbed on the graves, on the stones worn with rains,
And we gazed up the aisle, through the small leaded panes.
She sate by the pillar, we saw her clear.
'Margaret! hist! come, quick, we are here!'
'Dear heart,' I said, 'we are long alone.'
'The sea grows stormy, the little ones moan.'
'But, ah, she gave me never a look,
For her eyes were sealed to the holy book.
Loud prays the priest, shut stands the door.
Come away, children, call no more.
Come away, come down, call no more.'
Down, down, down,
Down to the depths of the sea.
She sits at her wheel in the humming town,
Singing most joyfully.
Hark what she sings: 'Oh, joy! oh, joy!
For the humming street, and the child with its toy;
For the priest, and the bell, and the holy well;
For the wheel where I spun,
And the blessed light of the sun.'
And so she sings her fill,
Singing most joyfully,
Till the shuttle falls from her hand,
And the whizzing wheel stands still.
She steals to the window, and looks at the sand,
And over the sand at the sea,
And her eyes are set in a stare,
And anon there breaks a sigh,
And anon there drops a tear,
From a sorrow-clouded eye,
And a heart sorrow-laden,
A long, long sigh,
For the cold strange eyes of a little Mermaiden,
And the gleam of her golden hair."

Not less excellent, in a style wholly different, was A.'s treatment (and there was this high element of promise in A. that, with a given story to work upon, he was always successful) of the Ægyptian legend of Mycerinus, a legend not known unfortunately to general English readers, who are therefore unable to appreciate the skill displayed in dealing with it. We must make room for

one extract, however, in explanation of which it is only necessary to say that Mycerinus, having learnt from the oracle that being too just a king for the purposes of the gods, who desired to afflict the Ægyptians, he was to die after six more years, made the six years into twelve by lighting his gardens all night with torches, and revelled out what remained to him of life. We can give no idea of the general conception of the poem, but as a mere piece of description this is very beautiful.

> "There by the river bank he wandered on,
> From palm grove on to palm grove, happy trees,
> Their smooth tops shining sunwards, and beneath
> Burying their unsunned stems in grass and flowers;
> Where in one dream the feverish time of youth
> Might fade in slumber, and the feet of joy
> Might wander all day long, and never tire:
> Here came the king, holding high feast at morn,
> Rose-crowned: and even when the sun went down,
> A hundred lamps beamed in the tranquil gloom,
> From tree to tree, all through the twinkling grove,
> Revealing all the tumult of the feast,
> Flushed guests, and golden goblets foamed with wine,
> While the deep burnished foliage overhead
> Splintered the silver arrows of the moon."

Containing as it did poems of merit so high as these, it may seem strange that this volume should not have received a more ready recognition; for there is no excellence which the writer of the passages which we have quoted could hereafter attain, the promise of which would not be at once perceived in them. But the public are apt to judge of books of poetry by the rule of mechanism, and try them not by their strongest parts but by their weakest; and in the present instance (to mention nothing else) the stress of weight in the title which was given to the collection was laid upon what was by no means adequate to bearing it. Whatever be the merits of the "Strayed Reveller" as poetry, it is certainly not a poem in the sense which English people generally attach to the word, looking as they do not

only for imaginative composition but for verse;—and as certainly if the following passage had been printed merely as prose, in a book which professed to be nothing else, no one would have suspected that it was composed of an agglutination of lines.

"The gods are happy; they turn on all sides their shining eyes, and see below them earth and men. They see Tiresias sitting staff in hand on the warm grassy Asopus bank, his robe drawn over his old, sightless head, revolving inly the doom of Thebes. They see the Centaurs in the upper glens of Pelion, on the streams where the red-berried ashes fringe the clear brown shallow pools; with streaming flanks and heads reared proudly, snuffing the mountain wind. They see the Scythian on the wide steppe, unharnessing his wheeled house at noon; he tethers his beast down and makes his meal, mare's milk and bread baked on the embers; all around the boundless waving grass plains stretch, thick starred with saffron and the yellow hollyhock and flag-leaved isis flowers."

No one will deny that this is fine imaginative painting, and as such poetical,—but it is the poetry of well written, elegant prose. Instead of the recurring sounds, whether of rhyme or similarly weighted syllables, which constitute the outward form of what we call verse, we have the careless grace of uneven, undulating sentences, flowing on with a rhythmic cadence indeed, but free from all constraint of metre or exactitude of form. It may be difficult, perhaps it is impossible, to fix the measure of license which a poet may allow himself in such matters, but it is at least certain that the greatest poets are those who have allowed themselves the fewest of such liberties: in art as in morals, and as in everything which man undertakes, true greatness is the most ready to recognize and most willing to obey those simple outward laws which have been sanctioned by the experience of mankind, and we suspect the originality which cannot move except on novel paths.

This is but one of several reasons which explain the apathy of the public on A.'s first appearance. There

was large promise, but the public require performance; and in poetry a single failure overweighs a hundred successes. It was possible that his mistakes were the mistakes of a man whose face was in the right direction —who was feeling his way, and who would ultimately find it; but only time could decide if this were so; and in the interval, the coldness of his reception would serve to test the nature of his faculty.

So far we have spoken with reserve, for we have simply stated the feelings with which we regarded this little volume on first reading it; but the reserve is no longer necessary, and the misgivings which we experienced have not been justified. At the close of last year another volume was published, again of miscellaneous poems, which went beyond the most sanguine hopes of A.'s warmest admirers. As before with "The Strayed Revellers," so again with "Empedocles on Ætna,"[1] the *pièce de résistance* was not the happiest selection. But of the remaining pieces, and of all those which he has more recently added, it is difficult to speak in too warm praise. In the unknown A., we are now to recognize a son of the late Master of Rugby, Dr. Arnold. Like a good knight, we suppose he thought it better to win his spurs before appearing in public with so honoured a name; but the associations which belong to it will suffer no alloy from him who now wears it. Not only is the advance in art remarkable, in greater clearness of effect, and in the mechanical handling of words, but far more in simplicity and healthfulness of moral feeling. There is no more obscurity, and no mysticism; and we see everywhere the working of a mind bent earnestly on cultivating whatever is highest and worthiest in itself; of a person who is endeavouring, without affectation, to follow the best things, to see clearly what is good, and right, and true, and to fasten his heart upon these. There is usually a period in the growth of poets in which, like coarser people, they

[1] *Empedocles on Ætna, and other Poems.* By A. London: 1852.

mistake the voluptuous for the beautiful; but in Mr. Arnold there is no trace of any such tendency; pure, without effort, he feels no enjoyment and sees no beauty in the atmosphere of the common passions; and in nobleness of purpose, in a certain loftiness of mind singularly tempered with modesty, he continually reminds us of his father. There is an absence, perhaps, of colour; it is natural that it should be so in the earlier poems of a writer who proposes aims such as these to himself; his poetry is addressed to the intellectual, and not to the animal emotions; and to persons of animal taste, the flavour will no doubt be over simple; but it is true poetry—a true representation of true human feeling. It may not be immediately popular, but it will win its way in the long run, and has elements of endurance in it which enable it to wait without anxiety for recognition.

Among the best of the new poems is "Tristram and Iseult." It is unlucky that so many of the subjects should be so unfamiliar to English readers, but it is their own fault if they do not know the "Mort d'Arthur." We must not calculate, however, on too much knowledge in such unpractical matters; and as the story is too long to tell in this place, we take an extract which will not require any. It is a picture of sleeping children as beautiful as Sir Francis Chantrey's.

"But they sleep in sheltered rest,
Like helpless birds in the warm nest
On the castle's southern side,
Where feebly comes the mournful roar
Of buffeting wind and surging tide,
Through many a room and corridor.
Full on the window the moon's ray
Makes their chamber as bright as day.
It shines upon the blank white walls,
And on the snowy pillow falls,
And on two angel heads doth play,
Turn'd to each other: the eyes closed,
The lashes on the cheek reposed.
Round each sweet brow the cap close set

Hardly lets peep the golden hair ;
Through the soft opened lips the air
Scarcely moves the coverlet.
One little wandering arm is thrown
At random on the counterpane,
And often the fingers close in haste,
As if their baby owner chased
The butterflies again.
This stir they have, and this alone,
But else they are so still—
Ah, you tired madcaps, you lie still ;
But were you at the window now,
To look forth on the fairy sight
Of your illumined haunts by night,
To see the park glades where you play
Far lovelier than they are by day,
To see the sparkle on the eaves,
And upon every giant bough
Of those old oaks whose wan red leaves
Are jewelled with bright drops of rain—
How would your voices run again !
And far beyond the sparkling trees,
Of the castle park, one sees
The bare heath spreading clear as day,
Moor behind moor, far far away,
Into the heart of Brittany.
And here and there locked by the land
Long inlets of smooth glittering sea,
And many a stretch of watery sand,
All shining in the white moonbeams ;
But you see fairer in your dreams."

This is very beautiful ; a beautiful description of one of the most beautiful objects in nature ; but it is a description which could never have been composed except by a person whose mind was in tune with all innocent loveliness, and who found in the contemplation of such things not merely a passing emotion of pleasure but the deepest and most exquisite enjoyment.

Besides "Tristram and Iseult," we select for especial mention out of this second volume, "A Farewell," "Self-Dependence," "Morality"; two very highly-finished pieces called "The Youth of Nature," and "The Youth

of Man," expressing two opposite states of feeling, which we all of us recognize, and yet which, as far as we know, have never before found their way into language; and "A Summer Night," a small meditative poem, containing one passage, which, although not perfect—for, if the metre had been more exact, the effect would, in our opinion, have been very much enhanced—is, nevertheless, the finest that Mr. Arnold has yet written.

"And I. I know not if to pray
Still to be what I am, or yield and be
Like all the other men I see.
For most men in a brazen prison live,
Where in the sun's hot eye,
With heads bent o'er their toil, they languidly
Their minds to some unmeaning taskwork give,
Dreaming of nought beyond their prison wall;
And as, year after year,
Fresh products of their barren labour fall
From their tired hands, and rest
Never yet comes more near,
Gloom settles slowly down over their breast,
And while they try to stem
The waves of mournful thought by which they are prest,
Death in their prison reaches them
Unfreed, having seen nothing still unblest.

And the rest, a few,
Escape their prison, and depart
On the wide ocean of life anew.
There the freed prisoner, where'er his heart
Listeth, will sail;
Nor does he know how there prevail,
Despotic on life's sea,
Trade winds that cross it from eternity.
Awhile he holds some false way, undebarred
By thwarting signs, and braves
The freshening wind and blackening waves.
And then the tempest strikes him, and between
The lightning bursts is seen

Only a driving wreck,
And the pale master on his spar-strewn deck
With anguished face and flying hair,
Grasping the rudder hard,
Still bent to make some port he knows not where,
Still standing for some false impossible shore.
And sterner comes the roar
Of sea and wind, and through the deepening gloom,
Fainter and fainter wreck and helmsman loom."

In these lines, in powerful and highly-sustained metaphor, lies the full tragedy of modern life.

"Is there no life but these alone,
Madman or slave, must man be one?"

We disguise the alternative under more fairly-sounding names, but we cannot escape the reality; and we know not, after all, whether there is deeper sadness in a broken Mirabeau or Byron, or in the contented prosperity of a people who once knew something of noble aspirations, but have submitted to learn from a practical age that the business of life is to make money, and the enjoyments of it what money can buy. A few are ignobly successful; the many fail, and are miserable; and the subtle anarchy of selfishness finds its issue in madness and revolution. But we need not open this painful subject. Mr. Arnold is concerned with the effect of the system on individual persons; with the appearance which it wears to young highly sensitive men on their entry upon the world, with the choice of a life before them; and it is happy for the world that such men are comparatively rare, or the mad sort would be more abundant than they are.

We cannot but think it unfortunate that this poem, with several others of the highest merit, have been omitted in the last edition, while others find a place there, for which comparatively we care little. Uniformity of excellence has been sacrificed to uniformity of character, a subsidiary matter which in itself is of

slight importance, and which the public would never quarrel for if they were treated with an ever pleasing variety. As it is, we have still to search three volumes for the best specimens of Mr. Arnold's powers, and opportunities are still left for ill-natured critics to make extracts of an apparently inferior kind. There is a remedy for this, however, in the future, and the necessary sifting will no doubt get itself duly accomplished at last. In the meantime, before noticing the late edition, we have a few words to say about Empedocles, the ground of objection to which we cannot think Mr. Arnold adequately understands, although he has omitted it in his present edition, and has given us his reasons for doing so. Empedocles, as we all know, was a Sicilian philosopher, who, out of discontent with life, or from other cause, flung himself into the crater of Mount Ætna. A discontent of this kind, Mr. Arnold tells us, unrelieved by incident, hope, or resistance, is not a fit subject for poetry. The object of poetry is to please, and the spectacle of a man too weak to bear his trials, and breaking under them, cannot be anything but painful. The correctness of the portrait he defends; and the fault, as he thinks, is not in the treatment, but in the subject itself. Now it is true that as a rule poetry is better employed in exhibiting the conquest over temptations than the fall under them, and some escape of this kind for the feelings must be provided in tragedies, by the introduction of some powerful cause, either of temptation acting on the will or of an external force controlling the action, in order to explain and reconcile us to the catastrophe. A mere picture of imbecility is revolting simply; we cannot conceive ourselves acting in the same way under the same circumstances, and we can therefore feel neither sympathy with the actor nor interest in his fate. But we must be careful how we narrow our theories in such matters. In Werther we have an instance of the same trial, with the same issue as Mr. Arnold has described in Empedocles, and to say that Werther was a mistake, is to circumscribe the sphere of art by a definition which the

public taste will refuse to recognize. Nor is it true, in spite of Schiller's authority, that "all art is dedicated to enjoyment." Tragedy has other objects, the κάθαρσις or purifying of the emotions for instance, which, if we are to continue to use words in their ordinary sense, is something distinct from enjoyment, and not always reconcilable with it. Whatever will excite interest in a healthy, vigorous mind, that is a fair object of poetry, and there is a painful as well as a pleasant interest; it is an abuse of language to describe the sensations which we experience on reading "Philoctetes" or "Hamlet" as pleasant. They are not unmixedly painful, but surely not pleasant.

It is not therefore the actual fate of Empedocles which fails to interest us, but we are unable to feel that Mr. Arnold's account of him is the true account. In the absence of authentic material, the artist who hopes to interest us in his fate must at least make the story probable as he tells it; consistent in itself, with causes clearly drawn out proportioned to the effects resulting from them. And this it cannot be said that Mr. Arnold has done. Powerful as is much of the language which he places in the mouth of Empedocles, he has failed to represent him as in a condition in which suicide is the natural result. His trials, his disgusts, as far as he exhibits them, are not more than man may naturally be supposed able to bear, while of the impulses of a more definite character there is no trace at all. But a more grave deficiency still is, that among all the motives introduced, there is not one to make the climb of Ætna necessary or intelligible. Empedocles on Ætna might have been Empedocles in his room at Catana, and a dagger or a cup of hemlock would have answered all purposes equally well with a plunge in the burning crater. If the tradition of Empedocles is a real story of a thing which really happened, we may feel sure that some peculiar feeling connected with the mountain itself, some mystical theory or local tradition, led such a man as he was to such a means of self-immolation.

We turn from Empedocles, which perhaps it is scarcely fair to have criticised, to the first poem in the latest edition, "Sohrab and Rustum,"[1] a poem which alone would have settled the position which Mr. Arnold has a right to claim as a poet, and which is remarkable for its success in every point in which Empedocles appears deficient. The story comes down out of remote Persian antiquity; it is as old, perhaps it is older, than the tale of Troy; and, like all old stories which have survived the changes of so long a time, is in itself of singular interest. Rustum, the Hercules of the East, fell in with and loved a beautiful Tartar woman. He left her, and she saw him no more; but in time a child was born, who grew up with the princes of his mother's tribe, and became in early youth distinguished in all manly graces and noblenesses. Learning that he was the son of the great Rustum, his object is to find his father, and induce him, by some gallant action, to acknowledge and receive him. War breaks out between the Tartars and the Persians. The two armies come down upon the Oxus, and Sohrab having heard that Rustum had remained behind in the mountains, and was not present, challenges the Persian chief. Rustum, unknown to Sohrab, had in the meantime joined the army, and against a warrior of Sohrab's reputation, no one could be trusted to maintain the Persian cause except the old hero. So by a sad perversity of fate, and led to it by their very greatness, the father and the son meet in battle, and only recognize each other when Sohrab is lying mortally wounded. It is one of those terrible situations which only the very highest power of poetry can dwell upon successfully. If the right chord be not touched to the exactest nicety, if the shock of the incident in itself be not melted into pathos, and the nobleness of soul in the two sufferers be not made to rise above the cruel accident which crushes them, we cannot listen to the poet. The story overwhelms and

[1] *Poems.* By Matthew Arnold. A New Edition, London: 1853.

absorbs us; we desire to be left alone with it and with our own feelings, and his words about it become officious and intrusive. Homer has furnished Mr. Arnold with his model, and has taught him the great lesson that the language on such occasions cannot be too simple and the style too little ornamented. Perhaps it may be thought that he has followed Homer's manner even too closely. No one who has read "Mycerinus" and the "Forsaken Merman" can doubt that Mr. Arnold can write richly if he pleases. It is a little startling, therefore, to find the opening of this poem simpler than one would make it, even if telling it in prose to a child. As in the "Iliad," the same words are repeated over and over again for the same idea, without variation or attempt at it; and although it may easily be that our taste is spoiled by the high seasoning of the modern style, the result is that it strikes the attention to an extent which would have been better avoided. A perfect style does not strike at all, and it is a matter in which the reader ought to be considered even more than the abstract right. We have soon, however, ceased to think of that; the peculiarity which we have mentioned is confined to the beginning, and the success of the treatment is best proved by our forgetfulness, as we read on, of art and artist language and manner, in the overpowering interest of the story as it is drawn out before us. Extracts will convey a poor idea of a poem in which the parts are so wholly subordinate to the effect of the whole, and yet, in spite of this disadvantage, we can justify at least partially to our readers the opinions which we have generally expressed.

We will take the scene of the recognition, when Sohrab, lying wounded, and as yet ignorant of the name of his adversary, has declared himself Rustum's son. The father, at first incredulous and scornful, is led step by step, through the mention of old names and times, towards the ἀναγνώρισις, and after the most delicately traced alternations of feeling, all doubt is ended by the mark of the seal on Sohrab's arm which Rustum had given to his mother.

" How say'st thou? [Sohrab says.] Is that sign the proper sign
Of Rustum's son, or of some other man's?
He spoke: but Rustum gazed, and gazed, and stood
Speechless; and then he uttered one sharp cry,
Oh, boy, thy father!"

This is the first hint to Sohrab who has been his foe.

" And his voice choked there,
And then a dark cloud pass'd before his eyes,
And his head swam, and he sank down to earth.
But Sohrab crawled to where he lay, and cast
His arms about his neck, and kiss'd his lips,
And with fond faltering fingers stroked his cheeks,
Trying to call him back to life: and life
Came back to Rustum; and he op'd his eyes;
And they stood wide with horrour: and he seized
In both his hands the dust which lay around,
And threw it on his face, and smirched his hair,
His hair, and face, and beard, and glittering arms:
And strong convulsive groanings shook his breast,
And his sobs choked him, and he clutched his sword
To draw it, and for ever let life out.
But Sohrab saw his thought, and held his hand,
And with a soothing voice he spoke, and said
'Father, forbear, for I but meet to-day
The doom that at my birth was written down
In Heaven, and thou art Heaven's unconscious hand.
Surely my heart cried out that it was thou,
When first I saw thee; and thy heart spoke too,
I know it; but Fate trod those promptings down
Under its iron heel; Fate, Fate engaged
The strife, and hurled me on my father's spear.
But let us speak no more of this: I find
My father: let me feel that I have found.
Come, sit beside me on this sand, and take
My head betwixt thy hands, and kiss my cheeks,
And wash them with thy tears, and say "My son!"
Quick: quick! for numbered are my sands of life,
And swift; for like the lightning to this field
I came, and like the wind I go away.
Sudden and swift, and like a passing wind;
But it was writ in Heaven that this should be.'

So said he : and his voice released the heart
Of Rustum ; and his tears broke forth : he cast
His arms round his son's neck, and wept aloud,
And kiss'd him ; and awe fell on both the hosts
When they saw Rustum's grief ; and Ruksh, the horse,
With his head bowing to the ground and mane
Sweeping the dust, came near, and in mute woe,
First to the one, then to the other mov'd
His head, as if enquiring what their grief
Might mean ; and from his dark compassionate eyes
The big warm tears roll'd down and caked the sand."

As a picture of human life in Homer's manner, we cannot see why this passage, and indeed the whole poem, should not be thought as good as any one of the episodes in the "Æneid." We are not comparing Mr. Arnold with Virgil : for it is one thing to have written an epic and another to have written a small fragment ; but as a working up of a single incident it may rank by the side of Nisus and Euryalus, and deeper chords of feeling are touched in it than Virgil has ever touched.

And this leads us to Mr Arnold's preface, and to the account which he gives us of the object which he proposes to himself in poetry : and our notice of this must be brief, as our space is running to its conclusion. He tells us, in a manner most feelingly instructive, something of the difficulties which lie round a young poet of the present day who desires to follow his art to some genuine purpose ; and what he says will remind readers of Wordsworth of Professor Wilson's beautiful letter to him on a very similar subject. Unhappily the question is not one of poetry merely, but of far wider significance. Not the poet only, but every one of us who cannot be satisfied to tread with the crowd along the broad road which leads—we used to know whither, but desires "to cultivate," as Mr. Arnold says, "what is best and noblest" in ourselves, are as sorely at a loss

as he is with his art. To find the best models,—that indeed is the one thing for him and for us. But what are they and where? and the answer to the æsthetic difficulty lies as we believe in the solution of the moral one. To say this, however, is of infinitely little service for the practical direction of a living poet; and we are here advised (and for present purposes no doubt wisely) to fall back on the artists of classic antiquity. From them better than from the best of the moderns, the young poet will learn what art really is. He will learn that before beginning to sing it is necessary to have something to sing of, and that a poem is something else than a collection of sweet musical sentences strung together like beads or even jewels in a necklace. He will learn that the subject is greater than the manner; that the first is the one essential without a worthy choice of which nothing can prosper. Above all, he will learn that the restless craving after novelty, so characteristic of all modern writing, the craving after new plots, new stories, new ideas, is mere disease, and that the true original genius displays itself not in the fabrication of what has no existence, but in the strength and power with which facts of history, or stories existing so fixedly in the popular belief as to have acquired so to say the character of facts, shall be exhibited and delineated.

But while we allow with Mr. Arnold that the theory will best be learnt from the ancients, we cannot allow, as he seems to desire us to allow, that the practice of it was confined to them, or recommend as he does the disproportionate study, still less the disproportionate imitation of them. All great artists at all times have followed the same method, for greatness is impossible without it. The Italian painters are never weary of the Holy Family. The matter of Dante's poem lay before him in the creed of the whole of Europe. Shakespeare has not invented the substance of any one of his plays. And the "weighty experience" and "composure of judgment" with which the study of the ancients no doubt does furnish "those who habitually practise it,"

may be obtained we believe by the study of the thoughts of all great men of all ages; by the study of life in any age, so that our scope be broad enough.

It is indeed idle nonsense to speak, as some critics speak, of the "present" as alone having claims upon the poet. Whatever is great, or good, or pathetic, or terrible, in any age past or present, belongs to him, and is within his proper province; but most especially, if he is wise, he will select his subjects out of those which time has sealed as permanently significant. It is not easy in our own age to distinguish what has the elements in it of enduring importance; and time is wiser than we. But why dwell with such apparent exclusiveness on classic antiquity, as if there was no antiquity except the classic, and as if time were divided into the eras of Greece and Rome and the nineteenth century? The Hellenic poet sang of the Hellenes, why should not the Teutonic poet sing of the Teutons?

"Vixere fortes *post* Agamemnona."

And grand as are Achilles and Clytemnestra, they are not grander than their parallels in the German epic Criemhilda and Von Tronjè Hagen. We do not dream of prescribing to Mr. Arnold what subject he should choose. Let him choose what interests himself if he will interest his readers; and if he choose what is really human, let it come from what age it will, human hearts will answer to it. And yet it seems as if Teutonic tradition, Teutonic feeling, and Teutonic thought had the first claim on English and German poets. And those among them will deserve best of the modern world, and will receive the warmest welcome from it, who will follow Shakespeare in modelling into forms of beauty the inheritance which has come down to them of the actions of their own race. So most faithfully, if least directly, they will be treading in the steps of those great poets of Greece whom they desire to

imitate. Homer and Sophocles did not look beyond their own traditions and their own beliefs; they found in these and these only their exclusive and abundant material. Have the Gothic annals suddenly become poor, and our own quarries become exhausted and worthless?

# WORDS ABOUT OXFORD

MANY long years had passed since I visited Oxford,—some twenty-eight or more. I had friends among the resident members of that venerable domicile of learning. Pleasant had been the time that I had spent there, of which intervening years had not diminished the remembrance—perhaps heightened the tone of its colouring. On many accounts I regarded that beautiful city with affectionate veneration. There were more than local attractions to render it interesting. There were the recollections of those who ceased in the interval to be denizens of this world. These could not but breathe sadness over the noble edifices that recalled men, conversations, and convivialities which, however long departed, shadowed upon the mind its own inevitable destiny. Again were those venerable buildings before me in their architectural richness. There were tower, and roof, and gateway, in all their variety of outline, defined with the sharp light and shade peculiar to ecclesiastical architecture. There were tufted groves overshadowing the haunts of learning; and there, too, was old Magdalen, which used to greet our sight so pleasantly upon our approach to the city. I began to fancy I had leaped no gulf of time since, for the Cherwell ran on as of old. I felt that the happy allusion of Quevedo to the Tiber was not out of place here, "The fugitive is alone permanent." The same river ran on as it had run on before, but the cheerful faces that had been once reflected in its stream had passed away. I saw things once familiar as I saw them before; but "the fathers, where were they?" I was in this respect

like one awaked from the slumber of an age, who found himself a stranger in his own land.

I walked through High Street. I entered All Souls' and came out quickly, for the quadrangle, or rather one glance round it, was sufficient to put "the past to pain." I went over the different sites, and even paced Christ Church meadows. But I could not deceive myself for a moment. There was an indescribable vacuum somewhere that indicated there was no mode of making the past the present. What had become of the pleasant faces, the cheerful voices, the animal spirits, which seemed in my eyes to give a soul to those splendid donations of our forefathers to learning in years gone by? That instinct—soul, spirit, whatever it be—which animates and vivifies everything, and without which the palace is not comparable to the hovel possessing it,—that instinct or spirit was absent for me, at least. At length I adjourned to the Star, somewhat moody, more than half wishing I had not entered the city. I ordered my solitary meal, and began ruminating, as we all do, over the thousandth-time told tale of human destiny by generation after generation. I am not sure I did not greet with sullen pleasure a heavy, dark, dense mass of cloud that at that moment canopied the city. The mind finds all kinds of congenialities grateful at such moments. Some drops of rain fell; then a shower, tolerably heavy. I could not go out again as I intended doing. I sat and sipped my wine, thinking of the fate of cities,—of Nineveh the renowned, of the marbles lately recovered from thence with the mysterious arrow-headed characters. I thought that some future Layard might exhume the cornices of the Oxford temples. The deaths of cities were as inevitable as those of men. I felt that my missing friends had only a priority in mortality, and that the law of the Supreme existed to be obeyed without man's questionings.

But a sun-burst took place, the shower ceased, all became fresh and clear. I saw several gownsmen pass down the street, and I sallied forth again. Several who were in front of me, so full was I of old imaginings,

I thought might be old friends whom I should recognize. How idle! I strolled to the Isis. It was all glitter and gaiety. The sun shone out warmly and covered the surface of the river with gold. Numerous skiffs of the university-men were alive on the water, realizing the lines,—

> "Some lightly o'er the current swim,
> Some show their gaily gilded trim
> Quick glancing to the sun."

Here was the repetition of an old performance, but the actors were new. I too had once floated over that glittering water, or lain up by the bank in conversation, or reciting verses, or, perhaps, in that silent, dreamy vacancy, in which the mind ruminates or rests folded up within itself in the consciousness of its own immortality.

Here I must place a word or two in regard to the censures cast upon this magnificent foundation of learning relative to the extravagances of young collegians. Let it be granted, as it is asserted by some, that there is too much exclusiveness, and that there are improvements to be recommended in some of the details of an organization so ancient. It may be true to a certain extent, for what under heaven is perfect? But a vast mass of good is to be brought to bear on the other hand. I cannot, therefore, agree in those censures which journalism has cast upon the officers of the university, as if they encouraged, or, at all events, did not control, the vicious extravagance of young men. I am expressing only an individual opinion, it is true; and this may be a reason why it may be undervalued, when the justice of a question is not the criterion by which it is judged. All that such a foundation can be expected to do is to render the advantages of learning as accessible as possible, upon reasonable terms, that genius, not wealth alone, may be able to avail itself of its advantages. If the present sum be too high, let its reduction be considered with a view to any practicable change. The pecuniary resources of the collegian it

becomes no part of the duty of the university to control, beyond the demands necessary for the main object of instruction. As the circumstances of parents vary, so will the pecuniary allowance made to their offspring. It would be a task neither practicable nor justifiable for the university to regulate the outlay of the collegian, or, in fact, become the paymaster of his *menus plaisirs*. Only let such a task be imagined in its enormity of control, from the son of the nobleman with an allowance of a thousand a year to one of a hundred and fifty pounds. It is not in the college, but prior to the arrival there of the youth, that he should be instructed in the views his relations have in sending him, and be taught that he must not ape the outlay and show of those who have larger means. If a youth orders a dozen coats within a time for which one only would be found adequate, I do not see what his college has to do with it. Youths entering the navy and army are left in a much more extended field of temptation. No time-hallowed walls shelter them. No salutary college rules remind them of their moral duties, daily and almost hourly. They go up and down the world under their own guardianship, exposed to every sinister influence, and with inclinations only restrained by their own monitorship. The college discipline, even if it extend not beyond college duties, is a perpetual remembrancer of the high moral end for which the student is placed within its precincts. His only allurement to extravagance is the desire of vying with those who make a greater display than himself, or else it arises from, if possible, a less defensible motive, namely, that of becoming himself an object of emulation to others. It is not the duty of the college authorities to compensate by their watchfulness the effects of a weak understanding, or that lax principle, or the want of self-command, of which the neglect of the parent or guardian has been the cause. If the freshman is destitute of self-dependence and self-restraint he must suffer from the consequences. Not only in the navy and army is youth exposed to temptations very far beyond the collegian,

but in the inns of court young men are left to take care of themselves, in the midst of a great capital, without any surveillance whatever. From these youths arise excellent men of business. Most assuredly under the surveillance of a college in smaller cities, and where many heads of expense are from the nature of their position wholly out of the question, it does seem singular that such complaints should arise. It is true, display is the vice of modern society among the old as well as the young, and in both cases most dishonest means are had recourse to to sustain those appearances, which are all the world looks to. It is possible, therefore, that little efforts have been made to initiate youth, prior to entering the universities, in that path of self-denial and high-mindedness which are the safeguard from vicious prodigality. They bring with them the vices of their caste, whatever that caste may be. Youth is imitative, and seldom a clumsy copyist, of the faults of its elders, provided those faults are fashionable faults, however unprincipled. However this may be, I must protest against the universities being made answerable for these doings. Attempts have been made, and failed, in respect to manners and to credit; and have failed clearly because they were impracticable, and, more than that, better left alone. The university ought not to be answerable in such cases, any more than the benchers for the Temple students. It cannot be expected that the noble quadrangles of our colleges are to become something like poor-law prisons, and the regulations of the night be extended over the day. The very existence of the collegian, as such, implies something like freedom, both mental and bodily. Learning that is converted into a tyranny will never bring forth good fruit. It is the duty of parents and schoolmasters to impress upon the mind of youth that a seat of learning is the home of an easy frugality rather than of prodigal rivalry; that the university will only give degrees and honours where there is industry and good moral conduct. It is to be feared that youth, quitting the discipline of the school, looks upon the university as the

place where he may indulge in his own wayward will, and be as idle and indolent as he please. If this be the case the university is not to blame for such lapses, but a bad prior apprehension of duty, and a defective, ill-directed education.

It is impossible to read the biographies of some of our most celebrated men, and not to see that with means scanty enough they were enabled to keep their terms with honour, and in the end confer additional celebrity upon the noble foundations where they had studied. If such be the case, we have only the result of personal good or ill conduct to explain the whole of the affair. But enough on this subject.

But it is not the venerable appearance of University College, hallowed by the associations of so many centuries in age, nor Queen's opposite, nor All Souls', nor any other of the colleges as mere buildings, that so connect them with our feelings. We must turn the mind from stone and wood to the humanity in connection with them. It is that which casts over them the "religious light," speaking so sadly and sweetly to the heart. In University College we see the glorious name of Alfred, and nearly a thousand years, with their perished annals, point to it as the witness of their departed successions. Who on seeing New College does not recall William of Wykeham? and then, what a roll of proud names own this renowned university for their *Alma Mater*. The very stones "prate of the whereabout" of things connected with the development of great minds, and while we look without fatigue at the gorgeous mass of buildings in this university, we feel we are contemplating what carries an intimate connexion, in object at least, with that all of man which marches in the track of eternity. It is not mere antiquity, therefore, on which our reverence for a great seminary of learning is founded. Priority of existence has no solid claims to our regard, except for that *verde antique* which covers it, as it covers all things past, good or indifferent; it is the connexion of the foundation with the history of man—with the names that, like

the flowers called "immortals," bloom amid the wrecks and desolateness with which the flood of ages strew the rearway of humankind.

Of late there has been small response to feelings such as these in the great world, for we have not been looking much toward what is above us, nor discriminating from meaner things those which approach to heroic natures. We must abandon Mammon, politics, and polemics, when we would approach the threshold of elevated meditation—when we dwell on the illustrious names of the past, and tread over the stones which they trod. I never wandered along the banks of the sedgy Cam, at that lone, twilight hour, when the dimness of external objects tends most to concentrate the faculties upon the immediate object of contemplation, but I have fancied the shades of Bacon, Milton, or Locke, to be near me, as the Indian fancies the shades of his fathers haunt the old hunting-grounds of his race. I know that these are heterodox feelings in the present day. I know that he who speaks of Homer or Milton, for example, is continually answered by the question, "Who reads them now?" The truth being, perhaps, that we are getting too far below them to relish their superior standard in sterling merit. But there are still in our universities, if not elsewhere, some who are content to be the last of the Goths in the estimation of the multitude, who cannot see the Isis, or Cherwell, or the reedy Cam, without feelings of which the crowd knows nothing; who can dream away an hour in the avenue of Christ Church, and almost conjure spirits from the depths of the grave to realize the pictures of imagination, which are there always invested with purity and holiness, so much do external things impress their character on our imaginings. This is the true poetry of life, neither found in the haunts of fashion, nor among the denizens of Cornhill or St. Giles'. The good and deep things of the mind, the search into the secrets of nature, the sublimest truth, the purest philosophy of which man has to boast, has proceeded from those who were inhabitants of such seats of learning. It is im-

possible to state the precise amount of assistance which genius and learning may derive from the ease and peace enjoyed in such a university. They are inestimable to the student from association, tranquillity, and convenience. The very "dim religious light" of college rooms are solicitations to reflection. Then there are the conveniences of first-rate professors, and access to the writings of the learned in all ages. Thus some who professed a distaste for a university life, have returned to it again, and made it the arena where they have conquered a lasting reputation—such, for example, was the case with Gray the poet.

The increase of knowledge, and consequently of morality, is the great aim of such a noble establishment as this; and the rewards and honours dispensed there are bestowed in proportion to the industry and good conduct of those who receive them. If the offences of freshmen outside the walls be unvisited by the university from wariness in the offenders, or the impossibility of controlling them, they are certain to meet with a just estimation of their demerit here; and, as before noticed, this is perhaps the best mode of repressing them. The assistance derived by the industrious student from the university itself is invaluable. The very locality is an aid to progress. Where can there be places more favourable for thought than those noble buildings, ancient halls, and delightful walks? Everything invites to contemplation. Magdalen always seemed to me as if soliciting the student's presence in a peculiar manner. A favourite resort of mine, at certain times, was the road passing the Observatory, leading to Woodstock. But of all the college walks, those of Magdalen were the more impressive and attractive. It appeared to embody the whole of the noble city in its own personification, as a single word will sometimes express the pith of an entire sentence. The "Mighty Tom" in the olden time, even of Walter de Mapes, if its metal was then out of the ore, never sounded (then perhaps not nine) but the midnight hour, to that worthy archdeacon, with more of the character of its locality, than the visual

aspect of Magdalen represents the beautiful city to one in its entirety. It seems a sort of metonymy; Maudlin put for Oxford. The walk is, after all, but a sober path, worthy by association with one of the walks of Eden. Yet it shows no gay foliage, nor "shade above shade a woody theatre," such as is seen on a mountain declivity. It is a simple shadowy walk—shadowy to richness, cool, tranquil, redolent of freshness. There the soul feels "private, inactive, calm, contemplative," linked to things that were and are not. The mellow hue of time, not yet stricken by decay, clothes the buildings of this college, which, compared with other edifices more steeped in maturity of years, occupies, as it were, a middle term in existence.

The variety of building in this city is amazing, and would occupy a very considerable time to study even imperfectly. At a little distance no place impresses the mind more justly with its own lofty pretensions. The towers, steeples, and domes, rising over the masses of foliage beneath, which conceal the bodies of the edifices, seen at the break of morning or at sunset, appear in great beauty. Bathed in light, although not the "alabaster tipped with golden spires" of the poet, for even the climate of Oxford is no exception to the defacement of nature's colouring, everywhere that coal smoke ascends; but the *tout ensemble* is truly poetical and magnificent.

Oriel still, they say, maintains its precedency of teaching its students how to conduct themselves with a view to university honours, and to the world's respect. The preliminary examinations there have proved a touchstone of merit, and elevated Oriel College into something near the envy of every other in this country. Worthy Oriel, the star of Oxford. "I don't know how it is," said the Rev. C. C., walking down High Street one day, "but Oriel College is all I envy Oxford. It is the richest gem in the ephod of the high-priest (vice-chancellor) of this university. I should like to steal and transplant it to my *Alma Mater* among the fens."

There was formerly a Welsh harper in Oxford, whom

the collegians sometimes denominated King David. He was the first of the Cymri brotherhood I ever heard perform. Since that distant day I have often heard those minstrels in their native land, particularly in North Wales, at Bedd Gelert, Caernarvon, and other places, but I confess I never was so much struck as by this Oxford harper. He often played at the Angel, where the university men used to group round him, for he excited general admiration. His music was not of so plaintive a character as that in his own land, or else the scenery of the latter had some effect in saddening the music there through association—perhaps this difference was, after all, only in fancy.

Christchurch, the noblest of the churches! How have I heard with delight its merry peal of bells, and the deep resonance of the "Mighty Tom," that sounds with no "friendly voice" the call home of the students still, I presume, as it did so many years ago! There is a long list of names, of no mean reputation, educated here, since the rapacious Henry VIII. seized the foundations, which had belonged to Cardinal Wolsey. The gratitude of posterity, never very strong, has in the present case preserved the remembrance of Wolsey, if I recollect aright, by a statue of the proud man in his cardinal's robes. The grove of trees belonging to Christchurch, and the scenery accompanying the entire buildings, are eminently impressive. Here, when divine service is celebrating, there is a peculiar propriety, or rather adaptation of the architecture to the feeling; the trees, and every accompaniment, are suitable to the end. There is religion or its sentiment addressing the mind here through every sense. All that can raise devotion in external appliances, combines in a wonderful manner; and when the sound of the organ is reverberated deeply along the vaulted roofs and walls, the effect was indescribably fine. Christchurch walk or meadow is an adjunct to this college, such as few places possess. I have trod it with those who will never tread it again. I have skimmed over its smooth shaven surface when life seemed a vista of unmeasured years. Its very beauty

touches upon a melancholy chord, since it vibrates the sound of time passed away with those who lie in dust in distant climates, of whom memory alone is now the only record that they were and are not.

I remember being told by an eminent, but aged doctor in divinity, who had been the better part of his life employed in the education of youth, that he had kept an account of the history of all his pupils as far as he could obtain it, and they were very numerous. From his own tuition—and there were some celebrated names amongst them—he traced them to the university, or to professions of a more active nature than a sojourn at the university would allow. To Oxford he had sent the larger number of his pupils. "And afterwards, doctor?" "Some came off nobly there; others I heard of in distant parts of the globe in their country's service: but it is the common tale with nearly all of them—they are dead." What hosts, I often thought, who had moved among the deep shades of this university until it became entwined with their earliest affections —who had studied within those embattled walls until the sight of them became almost a part of his existence —what hosts of such have but served to swell the waters of oblivion, and press the associations of a common mortality upon the mind in the reflection on this very truism! The late Sir Egerton Brydges—a writer whose talents, though admitted, were never received as they merited to have been by the world, owing, perhaps, to an untoward disposition in other respects—was of opinion that the calmness and seclusion of a university were not best adapted for calling forth the efforts of genius; but that adversity and some struggling were necessary to bring out greatness of character. He thought that praise enervated the mind, and that to bear it required a much greater degree of fortitude than to withstand censure. The consequence of this would be, that the honours decreed in a university must be pernicious to youth. This cannot be conceded. Sir Egerton's notion may be just in relation to himself, or to one or two temperaments irregularly con-

stituted; but a university exists not for the exceptions, but for the many. How numerous is the list of those who, but for the fostering care of Oxford or Cambridge, would have never been known as the ornament and delight of their fellow-men! How much more numerous is the list of those, whose abilities not rising beyond the circle of social usefulness have lived "obscure to fame," yet owe the pleasure they imparted to their friends, and the beguilement of many troubles inseparable from mortality, to the fruits of their university studies, and to a partial unrolling before them of that map of knowledge, which before those of loftier claims and some hold upon fame had been more amply displayed! In this view of the matter, the justness of which cannot be contested, the utility of such foundations is boundless. The effect upon the social body—I do not speak of polemics, but of the sound instruction thus made available—cannot be estimated. In the midst of fluctuating systems of instruction, it is something to have a standard by which to test the measure of knowledge imparted to youth. If accused of being restricted in variety of knowledge, the perfection and mastery in what is taught must be conceded to Oxford and Cambridge. Perhaps there is too much reason to fear, that without these foundations we should speedily fall into a very superficial knowledge, indeed, of the classical languages of antiquity. This would be to exclude ourselves from an acquaintance with all past time, except in monkish fiction and the feudal barbarism of the Goths of the north.

There are, I verily believe, or I should rather say there were, imbibed at the university so many attachments at one time to words in place of things, that the collegian in after life became liable to reproach upon this head. Pedants are bred everywhere out of literature, and the variety in verbiage once exhibited by some university men has been justly condemned. But while such word-worms were crawling here and there out of the porches of our colleges, giants in acquirement were striding over them in their petty convolutions. Their

intertwinings attracted the attention of the mere gazer, who is always more stricken with any microcosmic object that comes casually in the way and is embraced at a glance, than with objects the magnitude of which demand repeated examinations. But all this while the great and glorious spring of knowledge was unpolluted. The reign of mere verbiage passed away; the benefits of the universities had never ceased to be imparted the whole time. The key to the better stores of knowledge was placed in the hands of every one who chose to avail himself of its advantages. The minds of the collegians were filled with an affection for the works of the writers of antiquity, which have been the guide, solace, and pleasure of the greatest and most accomplished men since the Christian era commenced. Studies will teach their own use in after life "by the wisdom that is about them and above them, won by observation," as a great writer observes; but then there *must be* the studies.

There seems of late years much less of that feeling for poetry than once existed; the same may be observed in respect to classical learning. Few now regard how perished nations lived and passed away,—how men thought, acted, and were moved, for example, in the time of Pericles or the Roman Augustus. What are they to us? What is blind Meonides to us, or that Roman who wrote odes so beautifully—who understood so well the philosophy of life and the poetry of life at the spring of Bardusia? In the past generation, a part of the adolescent being and of manhood extended a kindly feeling towards them. We hear no admiration of those immortal strains now. We must turn for them to our universities. People are getting shy of them, as rich men shirk poor friends. Are we in the declining state, that of "mechanical arts and merchandize," to use Lord Bacon's phrase, and is our middle age of learning past? Even then, thank Heaven, we have our universities still, where we may, for a time at least, enter and converse with the spirits of the good, that "sit in the clouds and mock" the rest of the greedy

world. They will last our time—glorious mementos of the anxiety of our forefathers for the preservation of learning; hallowed by grateful recollections, by time, renown, virtue, conquests over ignorance, imperishable gratitude, a proud roll of mighty names in their sons, and the prospect of continuing to be monuments of glory to unborn generations. Long may Oxford and Cambridge stand and brighten with years, though to some they may not, as they do to me, exhibit a title to the gratitude and admiration of Old England, to which it would be difficult to point out worthy rivals.

# ENGLAND'S FORGOTTEN WORTHIES

THE Reformation, the Antipodes, the American Continent, the Planetary system, and the Infinite deep of the Heavens have now become common and familiar facts to us. Globes and orreries are the playthings of our school-days; we inhale the spirit of Protestantism with our earliest breath of consciousness; it is all but impossible to throw back our imagination into the time when, as new grand discoveries, they stirred every mind which they touched with awe and wonder at the revelation which God had sent down among mankind. Vast spiritual and material continents lay for the first time displayed, opening fields of thought and fields of enterprise of which none could conjecture the limit. Old routine was broken up. Men were thrown back on their own strength and their own power, unshackled to accomplish whatever they might dare. And although we do not speak of these discoveries as the cause of that enormous force of heart and intellect which accompanied them (for they were as much the effect as the cause, and one reacted on the other), yet at any rate they afforded scope and room for the play of powers which, without such scope, let them have been as transcendent as they would, must have passed away unproductive and blighted.

An earnest faith in the supernatural, an intensely real conviction of the divine and devilish forces by which the universe was guided and misguided, was the inheritance of the Elizabethan age from Catholic

Christianity. The fiercest and most lawless men did then really and truly believe in the actual personal presence of God or the devil in every accident, or scene, or action. They brought to the contemplation of the new heaven and the new earth an imagination saturated with the spiritual convictions of the old era, which were not lost, but only infinitely expanded. The planets whose vastness they now learnt to recognize were, therefore, only the more powerful for evil or for good; the tides were the breathing of Demogorgon; and the idolatrous American tribes were real worshippers of the real devil, and were assisted with the full power of his evil army.

It is a form of thought which, however in a vague and general way we may continue to use its phraseology, has become, in its detailed application to life, utterly strange to us. We congratulate ourselves on the enlargement of our understanding when we read the decisions of grave law-courts in cases of supposed witchcraft; we smile complacently over Raleigh's story of the island of the Amazons, and rejoice that we are not such as he—entangled in the cobwebs of effete and foolish superstition. The true conclusion is the opposite of the conclusion which we draw. That Raleigh and Bacon could believe what they believed, and could be what they were notwithstanding, is to us a proof that the injury which such mistakes can inflict is unspeakably insignificant: and arising, as they arose, from a never-failing sense of the real awfulness and mystery of the world, and of the life of human souls upon it, they witness to the presence in such minds of a spirit, the loss of which not the most perfect acquaintance with every law by which the whole creation moves can compensate. We wonder at the grandeur, the moral majesty, of some of Shakespeare's characters, so far beyond what the noblest among ourselves can imitate, and at first thought we attribute it to the genius of the poet who has outstripped nature in his creations; but we are misunderstanding the power and the meaning of poetry in attributing creativeness

to it in any such sense; Shakespeare created, but only as the spirit of nature created around him, working in him as it worked abroad in those among whom he lived. The men whom he draws were such men as he saw and knew; the words they utter were such as he heard in the ordinary conversations in which he joined. At the Mermaid with Raleigh and with Sidney, and at a thousand un-named English firesides, he found the living originals for his Prince Hals, his Orlandos, his Antonios, his Portias, his Isabellas. The closer personal acquaintance which we can form with the English of the age of Elizabeth, the more we are satisfied that Shakespeare's great poetry is no more than the rhythmic echo of the life which it depicts.

It was, therefore, with no little interest that we heard of the formation of a society which was to employ itself, as we understood, in republishing in accessible form some, if not all, of the invaluable records compiled or composed by Richard Hakluyt. Books, like everything else, have their appointed death-day; the souls of them, unless they be found worthy of a second birth in a new body, perish with the paper in which they lived, and the early folio Hakluyts, not from their own want of merit, but from our neglect of them, were expiring of old age. The five-volume quarto edition, published in 1811, so little people then cared for the exploits of their ancestors, was but of 270 copies; it was intended for no more than for curious antiquaries, or for the great libraries, where it could be consulted as a book of reference; and among a people, the greater part of whom had never heard Hakluyt's name, the editors are scarcely to be blamed if it never so much as occurred to them that general readers would ever come to care to have it within their reach.

And yet those five volumes may be called the Prose Epic of the modern English nation. They contain the heroic tales of the exploits of the great men in whom the new era was inaugurated; not mythic, like the Iliads and the Eddas, but plain broad narratives of substantial facts, which rival them in interest and

grandeur. What the old epics were to the royally or nobly born, this modern epic is to the common people. We have no longer kings or princes for chief actors, to whom the heroism, like the dominion, of the world had in time past been confined. But, as it was in the days of the apostles, when a few poor fishermen from an obscure lake in Palestine assumed, under the divine mission, the spiritual authority over mankind, so, in the days of our own Elizabeth, the seamen from the banks of the Thames and the Avon, the Plym and the Dart, self-taught and self-directed, with no impulse but what was beating in their own royal hearts, went out across the unknown seas fighting, discovering, colonizing, and graved out the channels, and at last paved them with their bones, through which the commerce and enterprise of England has flowed out over all the world. We can conceive nothing, not the songs of Homer himself, which would be read, among us at least, with more enthusiastic interest than these plain massive tales; and a people's edition of them in these days, when the writings of Ainsworth and Eugène Sue circulate in tens of thousands, would perhaps be the most blessed antidote which could be bestowed upon us. The heroes themselves were the men of the people —the Joneses, the Smiths, the Davises, the Drakes; and no courtly pen, with the one exception of Raleigh, lent its polish or its varnish to set them off. In most cases the captain himself, or his clerk or servant, or some unknown gentleman volunteer, sat down and chronicled the voyage which he had shared, and thus inorganically arose a collection of writings which, with all their simplicity, are for nothing more striking than for the high moral beauty, warmed with natural feeling, which displays itself through all their pages. With us, the sailor is scarcely himself beyond his quarter-deck. If he is distinguished in his profession, he is professional merely; or if he is more than that, he owes it not to his work as a sailor, but to independent domestic culture. With them their profession was the school of their nature, a high moral education which most

brought out what was most nobly human in them; and the wonders of earth, and air, and sea, and sky, were a real intelligible language in which they heard Almighty God speaking to them.

That such hopes of what might be accomplished by the Hakluyt Society should in some measure be disappointed, is only what might naturally be anticipated of all very sanguine expectation. Cheap editions are expensive editions to the publisher, and historical societies, from a necessity which appears to encumber all corporate English action, rarely fail to do their work expensively and infelicitously; yet, after all allowances and deductions, we cannot reconcile ourselves to the mortification of having found but one volume in the series to be even tolerably edited, and that one to be edited by a gentleman to whom England is but an adopted country—Sir Robert Schomburgk. Raleigh's "Conquest of Guiana," with Sir Robert's sketch of Raleigh's history and character, form in everything but its cost a very model of an excellent volume. For every one of the rest we are obliged to say of them, that they have left little undone to paralyze whatever interest was reviving in Hakluyt, and to consign their own volumes to the same obscurity to which time and accident were consigning the earlier editions. Very little which was really noteworthy escaped the industry of Hakluyt himself, and we looked to find reprints of the most remarkable of the stories which were to be found in his collection. They began unfortunately with proposing to continue the work where he had left it, and produce narratives hitherto unpublished of other voyages of inferior interest, or not of English origin. Better thoughts appear to have occurred to them in the course of the work; but their evil destiny overtook them before their thoughts could get themselves executed. We opened one volume with eagerness, bearing the title of "Voyages to the North-west," in hope of finding our old friends Davis and Frobisher, and we found a vast unnecessary Editor's Preface; and instead of the voyages themselves, which

with their picturesqueness and moral beauty shine among the fairest jewels in the diamond mine of Hakluyt, an analysis and digest of their results, which Milton was called in to justify in an inappropriate quotation. It is much as if they had undertaken to edit "Bacon's Essays," and had retailed what they conceived to be the substance of them in their own language; strangely failing to see that the real value of the actions or the thought of remarkable men does not lie in the material result which can be gathered from them, but in the heart and soul of those who do or utter them. Consider what Homer's "Odyssey" would be, reduced into an analysis.

The editor of the "Letters of Columbus" apologizes for the rudeness of their phraseology. Columbus, he tells us, was not so great a master of the pen as of the art of navigation. We are to make excuses for him. We are put on our guard, and warned not to be offended, before we are introduced to the sublime record of sufferings under which his great soul was staggering towards the end of its earthly calamities, where the inarticulate fragments in which his thought breaks out from him, are strokes of natural art by the side of which the highest literary pathos is poor and meaningless.

And even in the subjects which they select they are pursued by the same curious fatality. Why is Drake to be best known, or to be only known, in his last voyage? Why pass over the success, and endeavour to immortalize the failure? When Drake climbed the tree in Panama, and saw both oceans, and vowed that he would sail a ship in the Pacific; when he crawled out upon the cliffs of Terra del Fuego, and leaned his head over the southernmost angle of the world; when he scored a furrow round the globe with his keel, and received the homage of the barbarians of the antipodes in the name of the Virgin Queen; he was another man from what he had become after twenty years of court life and intrigue, and Spanish fighting, and gold-hunting. There is a tragic solemnity in his end, if we take it as

the last act of his career; but it is his life, not his death, which we desire—not what he failed to do, but what he did.

But every bad has a worse below it, and more offensive than all these is the editor of Hawkins's "Voyage to the South Sea." The book is striking in itself; it is not one of the best, but it is very good; and as it is republished complete, if we read it through, carefully shutting off Captain Bethune's notes with one hand, we shall then find in it the same beauty which breathes in the tone of all the writings of the period.

It is a record of misfortune, but of misfortune which did no dishonour to him who sunk under it; and there is a melancholy dignity in the style in which Hawkins tells his story, which seems to say, that though he had been defeated, and had never again an opportunity of winning back his lost laurels, he respects himself still for the heart with which he endured a shame which would have broken a smaller man. It would have required no large exertion of editorial self-denial to have abstained from marring the pages with puns of which *Punch* would be ashamed, and with the vulgar affectation of patronage with which the sea captain of the nineteenth century condescends to criticize and approve of his half-barbarous precursor; but it must have been a defect in his heart, rather than in his understanding, which betrayed him into such an offence as this which follows. The war of freedom of the Araucan Indians is the most gallant episode in the history of the New World. The Spaniards themselves were not behindhand in acknowledging the chivalry before which they quailed, and, after many years of ineffectual attempts to crush them, they gave up a conflict which they never afterwards resumed; leaving the Araucans alone, of all the American races with which they came in contact, a liberty which they were unable to tear from them. It is a subject for an epic poem, and whatever admiration is due to the heroism of a brave people whom no inequality of strength could appal and no defeats could crush, these poor Indians have a right to

demand of us. The story of the war was well known in Europe: and Hawkins, in coasting the western shores of South America, fell in with them, and the finest passage in his book is the relation of one of the incidents of the war.

"An Indian captain was taken prisoner by the Spaniards, and for that he was of name, and known to have done his devoir against them, they cut off his hands, thereby intending to disenable him to fight any more against them. But he, returning home, desirous to revenge this injury, to maintain his liberty, with the reputation of his nation, and to help to banish the Spaniard, with his tongue intreated and incited them to persevere in their accustomed valour and reputation, abasing the enemy and advancing his nation; condemning their contraries of cowardliness, and confirming it by the cruelty used with him and other his companions in their mishaps; showing them his arms without hands, and naming his brethren whose half feet they had cut off, because they might be unable to sit on horseback; with force arguing that if they feared them not, they would not have used so great inhumanity—for fear produceth cruelty, the companion of cowardice. Thus encouraged he them to fight for their lives, limbs, and liberty, choosing rather to die an honourable death fighting, than to live in servitude as fruitless members of the commonwealth. Thus using the office of a sergeant-major, and having loaden his two stumps with bundles of arrows, he succoured them who, in the succeeding battle, had their store wasted; and changing himself from place to place, animated and encouraged his countrymen with such comfortable persuasions, as it is reported and credibly believed, that he did more good with his words and presence, without striking a stroke, than a great part of the army did with fighting to the utmost."

It is an action which may take its place by the side of the myth of Mucius Scævola, or the real exploit of that brother of the poet Æschylus, who, when the Persians were flying from Marathon, clung to a ship till both his hands were hewn away, and then seized it with his teeth, leaving his name as a portent even in the splendid calendar of Athenian heroes. Captain Bethune, without call or need, making his notes merely,

as he tells us, from the suggestions of his own mind as he revised the proof-sheets, informs us, at the bottom of the page, that "it reminds him of the familiar lines,—

> "For Widdrington I needs must wail,
> As one in doleful dumps;
> For, when his legs were smitten off,
> He fought upon his stumps."

It must not avail him, that he has but quoted from the ballad of Chevy Chase. It is the most deformed stanza[1] of the modern deformed version which was composed in the eclipse of heart and taste, on the restoration of the Stuarts; and if such verses could then pass for serious poetry, they have ceased to sound in any ear as other than a burlesque; the associations which they arouse are only absurd, and they could only have continued to ring in his memory through their ludicrous doggerel.

When to these offences of the Society we add, that in the long laboured appendices and introductions, which fill up valuable space, which increase the expense of the edition, and into reading which many readers are, no doubt, betrayed, we have found nothing which assists the understanding of the stories which they are supposed to illustrate, when we have found what is most uncommon passed without notice, and what is most trite and familiar encumbered with comment; we have unpacked our hearts of the bitterness which these volumes have aroused in us, and can now take our leave of them and go on with our own more grateful subject.

Elizabeth, whose despotism was as peremptory as that

[1] Here is the old stanza. Let whoever is disposed to think us too hard on Captain Bethune compare them.

> "For Wetharrington my harte was wo,
> That even he slayne sholde be;
> For when both his leggis were hewen in to,
> He knyled and fought on his knee."

Even Percy, who, on the whole, thinks well of the modern ballad, gives up this stanza as hopeless.

of the Plantagenets, and whose ideas of the English constitution were limited in the highest degree, was, notwithstanding, more beloved by her subjects than any sovereign before or since. It was because, substantially, she was the people's sovereign; because it was given to her to conduct the outgrowth of the national life through its crisis of change, and the weight of her great mind and her great place were thrown on the people's side. She was able to paralyze the dying efforts with which, if a Stuart had been on the throne, the representatives of an effete system might have made the struggle a deadly one; and the history of England is not the history of France, because the inflexible will of one person held the Reformation firm till it had rooted itself in the heart of the nation, and could not be again overthrown. The Catholic faith was no longer able to furnish standing ground on which the English or any other nation could live a manly and a godly life. Feudalism, as a social organization, was not any more a system under which their energies could have scope to move. Thenceforward not the Catholic Church, but any man to whom God had given a heart to feel and a voice to speak, was to be the teacher to whom men were to listen; and great actions were not to remain the privilege of the families of the Norman nobles, but were to be laid within the reach of the poorest plebeian who had the stuff in him to perform them. Alone, of all the sovereigns in Europe, Elizabeth saw the change which had passed over the world. She saw it, and saw it in faith, and accepted it. The England of the Catholic Hierarchy and the Norman Baron, was to cast its shell and to become the England of free thought and commerce and manufacture, which was to plough the ocean with its navies, and sow its colonies over the globe; and the first thunder birth of these enormous forces and the flash of the earliest achievements of the new era roll and glitter through the forty years of the reign of Elizabeth with a grandeur which, when once its history is written, will be seen to be among the most sublime phenomena which the earth as yet has witnessed.

The work was not of her creation; the heart of the whole English nation was stirred to its depths; and Elizabeth's place was to recognize, to love, to foster, and to guide. The government originated nothing; at such a time it was neither necessary nor desirable that it should do so; but wherever expensive enterprises were on foot which promised ultimate good, but no immediate profit, we never fail to find among the lists of contributors the Queen's Majesty, Burleigh, Leicester, Walsingham. Never chary of her presence, for Elizabeth could afford to condescend, when ships were fitting for distant voyages in the river, the Queen would go down in her barge and inspect. Frobisher, who was but a poor sailor adventurer, sees her wave her handkerchief to him from the Greenwich Palace windows, and he brings her home a narwhal's horn for a present. She honoured her people, and her people loved her; and the result was that, with no cost to the government, she saw them scattering the fleets of the Spaniards, planting America with colonies, and exploring the most distant seas. Either for honour or for expectation of profit, or from that unconscious necessity by which a great people, like a great man, will do what is right, and must do it at the right time, whoever had the means to furnish a ship, and whoever had the talent to command one, laid their abilities together and went out to pioneer, and to conquer, and take possession, in the name of the Queen of the Sea. There was no nation so remote but what some one or other was found ready to undertake an expedition there, in the hope of opening a trade; and let them go where they would, they were sure of Elizabeth's countenance. We find letters written by her, for the benefit of nameless adventurers, to every potentate of whom she had ever heard, to the Emperors of China, Japan, and India, the Grand Duke of Russia, the Grand Turk, the Persian Sofee, and other unheard-of Asiatic and African princes; whatever was to be done in England, or by Englishmen, Elizabeth assisted when she could, and admired when she could not. The springs of great actions are always difficult to analyze—

impossible to analyze perfectly—possible to analyze only very proximately, and the force by which a man throws a good action out of himself is invisible and mystical, like that which brings out the blossom and the fruit upon the tree. The motives which we find men urging for their enterprises seem often insufficient to have prompted them to so large a daring. They did what they did from the great unrest in them which made them do it, and what it was may be best measured by the results, by the present England and America. Nevertheless, there was enough in the state of the world, and in the position of England, to have furnished abundance of conscious motive, and to have stirred the drowsiest routinier statesman.

Among material occasions for exertion, the population began to outgrow the employment, and there was a necessity for plantations to serve as an outlet. Men who, under happier circumstances, might have led decent lives, and done good service, were now driven by want to desperate courses—"witness," as Richard Hakluyt says, "twenty tall fellows hanged last Rochester assizes for small robberies;" and there is an admirable paper addressed to the Privy Council by Christopher Carlile, Walsingham's son-in-law, pointing out the possible openings to be made in or through such plantations for home produce and manufacture.

Far below all such prudential economics and mercantile ambitions, however, lay a noble enthusiasm which in these dull days we can hardly, without an effort, realize. The life-and-death wrestle between the Reformation and the old religion had settled in the last quarter of the sixteenth century into a permanent struggle between England and Spain. France was disabled. All the help which Elizabeth could spare barely enabled the Netherlands to defend themselves. Protestantism, if it conquered, must conquer on another field; and by the circumstances of the time the championship of the Reformed faith fell to the English sailors. The sword of Spain was forged in the gold-mines of Peru; the legions of Alva were only to be disarmed by intercepting

the gold ships on their passage; and, inspired by an enthusiasm like that which four centuries before had precipitated the chivalry of Europe upon the East, the same spirit which in its present degeneracy covers our bays and rivers with pleasure yachts then fitted out armed privateers, to sweep the Atlantic, and plunder and destroy Spanish ships wherever they could meet them.

Thus, from a combination of causes, the whole force and energy of the age was directed towards the sea. The wide excitement and the greatness of the interests at stake, raised even common men above themselves; and people who in ordinary times would have been no more than mere seamen, or mere money-making merchants, appear before us with a largeness and greatness of heart and mind in which their duties to God and their country are alike clearly and broadly seen and felt to be paramount to every other.

Ordinary English traders we find fighting Spanish war ships in behalf of the Protestant faith; the cruisers of the Spanish main were full of generous eagerness for the conversion of the savage nations to Christianity; and what is even more surprising, sites for colonization were examined and scrutinized by such men in a lofty statesmanlike spirit, and a ready insight was displayed by them into the indirect effects of a wisely-extended commerce on every highest human interest.

Again, in the conflict with the Spaniards, there was a further feeling, a feeling of genuine chivalry, which was spurring on the English, and one which must be well understood and well remembered, if men like Drake, and Hawkins, and Raleigh, are to be tolerably understood. One of the English Reviews, a short time ago, was much amused with a story of Drake having excommunicated a petty officer as a punishment for some moral offence; the reviewer not being able to see in Drake, as a man, anything more than a highly brave and successful buccaneer, whose pretences to religion might rank with the devotion of an Italian bandit to the Madonna. And so Hawkins, and even Raleigh, are

regarded by superficial persons, who see only such outward circumstances of their history as correspond with their own impressions. The high nature of these men, and the high objects which they pursued, will only rise out and become visible to us as we can throw ourselves back into their times and teach our hearts to feel as they felt. We do not find in the language of the voyagers themselves, or of those who lent them their help at home, any of that weak watery talk of "protection of aborigines," which as soon as it is translated into fact becomes the most active policy for their destruction, soul and body. But the stories of the dealings of the Spaniards with the conquered Indians, which were widely known in England, seem to have affected all classes of people, not with pious passive horror, but with a genuine human indignation. A thousand anecdotes in detail we find scattered up and down the pages of Hakluyt, who, with a view to make them known, translated Peter Martyr's letters; and each commonest sailor-boy who had heard them from his childhood among the tales of his father's fire-side, had longed to be a man, that he might go out and become the avenger of a gallant and suffering people. A high mission, undertaken with a generous heart, seldom fails to make those worthy of it to whom it is given; and it was a point of honour, if of nothing more, among the English sailors, to do no discredit by their conduct to the greatness of their cause. The high courtesy, the chivalry of the Spanish nobles, so conspicuous in their dealings with their European rivals, either failed to touch them in their dealings with uncultivated idolaters, or the high temper of the aristocracy was unable to restrain or to influence the masses of the soldiers. It would be as ungenerous as it would be untrue, to charge upon their religion the grievous actions of men who called themselves the armed missionaries of Catholicism, when the Catholic priests and bishops were the loudest in the indignation with which they denounced them. But we are obliged to charge upon it that slow and subtle influence so inevitably exercised

by any religion which is divorced from life, and converted into a thing of form, or creed, or ceremony, or system, which could permit the same men to be extravagant in a sincere devotion to the Queen of Heaven, whose entire lower nature, unsubdued and unaffected, was given up to thirst of gold, and plunder, and sensuality. If religion does not make men more humane than they would be without it, it makes them fatally less so; and it is to be feared that the spirit of the pilgrim fathers, which had oscillated to the other extreme, and had again crystallized into a formal antinomian fanaticism, reproduced the same fatal results as those in which the Spaniards had set them their unworthy precedent. But the Elizabethan navigators, full without exception of large kindness, wisdom, gentleness, and beauty, bear names untainted, as far as we know, with a single crime against the savages; and the name of England was as famous in the Indian seas as that of Spain was infamous. On the banks of the Oronooko there was remembered for a hundred years the noble captain who had come there from the great Queen beyond the seas; and Raleigh speaks the language of the heart of his country, when he urges the English statesmen to colonize Guiana, and exults in the glorious hope of driving the white marauder into the Pacific, and restoring the Incas to the throne of Peru.

"Who will not be persuaded," he says, "that now at length the great Judge of the world hath heard the sighs, groans, and lamentations, hath seen the tears and blood of so many millions of innocent men, women, and children, afflicted, robbed, reviled, branded with hot irons, roasted, dismembered, mangled, stabbed, whipped, racked, scalded with hot oil, put to the strapado, ripped alive, beheaded in sport, drowned, dashed against the rocks, famished, devoured by mastiffs, burned, and by infinite cruelties consumed, and purposeth to scourge and plague that cursed nation, and to take the yoke of servitude from that distressed people, as free by nature as any Christian."

Poor Raleigh! if peace and comfort in this world were of much importance to him, it was in an ill day

that he provoked the revenge of Spain. The strength of England was needed at the moment at its own door; the Armada came, and there was no means of executing such an enterprise. And afterwards the throne of Elizabeth was filled by a Stuart, and Guiana was to be no scene of glory for Raleigh; but, as later historians are pleased to think, it was the grave of his reputation.

But the hope burned clear in him through all the weary years of unjust imprisonment; and when he was a grey-headed old man, the base son of a bad mother used it to betray him. The success of his last enterprise was made the condition under which he was to be pardoned for a crime which he had not committed; and its success depended, as he knew, on its being kept secret from the Spaniards. James required of him on his allegiance a detail of what he proposed, giving him at the same time his word as a king that the secret should be safe with him, and the next day it was sweeping out of the port of London in the swiftest of the Spanish ships, with private orders to the Governor of St. Thomas to provoke a collision when Raleigh should arrive there, which should afterwards cost him his heart's blood.

We modern readers may run rapidly over the series of epithets under which he has catalogued the Indian sufferings, hoping that they are exaggerated, seeing that they are horrible, and closing our eyes against them with swiftest haste; but it was not so when every epithet suggested a hundred familiar facts; and some of these (not resting on English prejudice, but on sad Spanish evidence, which is too full of shame and sorrow to be suspected) shall be given in this place, however old a story it may be thought; because, as we said above, it is impossible to understand the actions of these men, unless we are familiar with the feelings of which their hearts were full.

The massacres under Cortez and Pizarro, terrible as they were, were not the occasion which stirred the deepest indignation. They had the excuse of what might be called, for want of a better word, necessity, and of the desperate position of small bands of men in

the midst of enemies who might be counted by millions. And in De Soto, when he burnt his guides in Florida (it was his practice when there was danger of treachery, that those who were left alive might take warning); or in Vasco Nunnez, praying to the Virgin on the mountains of Darien, and going down from off them into the valleys to hunt the Indian caciques, and fling them alive to his bloodhounds; there was, at least, with all this fierceness and cruelty, a desperate courage which we cannot refuse to admire, and which mingles with and corrects our horror. It is the refinement of the Spaniards' cruelty in the settled and conquered provinces, excused by no danger and provoked by no resistance, the details of which witness to the infernal coolness with which it was perpetrated; and the great bearing of the Indians themselves under an oppression which they despaired of resisting, which raises the whole history to the rank of a world-wide tragedy, in which the nobler but weaker nature was crushed under a malignant force which was stronger and yet meaner than itself. Gold hunting and lust were the two passions for which the Spaniards cared; and the fate of the Indian women was only more dreadful than that of the men, who were ganged and chained to a labour in the mines which was only to cease with their lives, in a land where but a little before they had lived a free contented people, more innocent of crime than perhaps any people upon earth. If we can conceive what our own feelings would be, if, in the "development of the mammalia" some baser but more powerful race than man were to appear upon this planet, and we and our wives and children at our own happy firesides were degraded from our freedom, and became to them what the lower animals are to us, we can perhaps realize the feelings of the enslaved nations of Hispaniola.

As a harsh justification of slavery, it is sometimes urged, that men who do not deserve to be slaves will prefer death to the endurance of it; and that if they prize their liberty, it is always in their power to assert it in the old Roman fashion. Tried even by so hard a

rule, the Indians vindicated their right, and before the close of the sixteenth century, the entire group of the Western Islands in the hands of the Spaniards, containing, when Columbus discovered them, many millions of inhabitants, were left literally desolate from suicide. Of the anecdotes of this terrible self-immolation, as they were then known in England, here are a few out of many.

The first is simple, and a specimen of the ordinary method. A Yucaian cacique, who was forced with his old subjects to labour in the mines, at last "calling those miners into an house, to the number of ninety-five, he thus debateth with them:"—

"'My worthy companions and friends, why desire we to live any longer under so cruel a servitude? Let us now go unto the perpetual seat of our ancestors, for we shall there have rest from these intolerable cares and grievances which we endure under the subjection of the unthankful. Go ye before, I will presently follow you.' Having so spoken, he held out whole handfuls of those leaves which take away life, prepared for the purpose, and giving every one part thereof, being kindled to suck up the fume; who obeyed his command, the king and his chief kinsmen reserving the last place for themselves."

We speak of the crime of suicide, but few persons will see a crime in this sad and stately leave-taking of a life which it was no longer possible to bear with unbroken hearts. We do not envy the Indian, who, with Spaniards before him as an evidence of the fruits which their creed brought forth, deliberately exchanged for it the old religion of his country, which could sustain him in an action of such melancholy grandeur. But the Indians did not always reply to their oppressors with escaping passively beyond their hands. Here is a story with matter in it for as rich a tragedy as Œdipus or Agamemnon; and in its stern and tremendous features, more nearly resembling them than any which were conceived even by Shakespeare.

An officer named Orlando had taken the daughter of a Cuban cacique to be his mistress. She was with

child by him, but, suspecting her of being engaged in some other intrigue, he had her fastened to two wooden spits, not intending to kill her, but to terrify her; and setting her before the fire, he ordered that she should be turned by the servants of the kitchen.

"The maiden, stricken with fear through the cruelty thereof, and strange kind of torment, presently gave up the ghost. The cacique her father, understanding the matter, took thirty of his men and went to the house of the captain, who was then absent, and slew his wife, whom he had married after that wicked act committed, and the women who were companions of the wife, and her servants every one. Then shutting the door of the house, and putting fire under it, he burnt himself and all his companions that assisted him, together with the captain's dead family and goods."

This is no fiction or poet's romance. It is a tale of wrath and revenge, which in sober dreadful truth enacted itself upon this earth, and remains among the eternal records of the doings of mankind upon it. As some relief to its most terrible features, we follow it with a story which has a touch in it of diabolical humour.

The slave-owners finding their slaves escaping thus unprosperously out of their grasp, set themselves to find a remedy for so desperate a disease, and were swift to avail themselves of any weakness, mental or bodily, through which to retain them in life. One of these proprietors being informed that a number of his people intended to kill themselves on a certain day, at a particular spot, and knowing by experience that they were too likely to do it, presented himself there at the time which had been fixed upon, and telling the Indians when they arrived, that he knew their intention, and that it was vain for them to attempt to keep anything a secret from him, he ended with saying, that he had come there to kill himself with them; that as he had used them ill in this world, he might use them worse in the next; "with which he did dissuade them presently from their purpose." With what efficacy such believers in the immortality of the soul were likely

to recommend either their faith or their God; rather, how terribly all the devotion and all the earnestness with which the poor priests who followed in the wake of the conquerors laboured to recommend it were shamed and paralyzed, they themselves too bitterly lament. It was idle to send out governor after governor with orders to stay such practices. They had but to arrive on the scenes to become infected with the same fever, or if any remnant of Castilian honour, or any faintest echoes of the faith which they professed, still flickered in a few of the best and noblest, they could but look on with folded hands in ineffectual mourning; they could do nothing without soldiers, and the soldiers were the worst offenders. Hispaniola became a mere desert; the gold was in the mines, and there were no poor slaves left remaining to extract it. One means which the Spaniards dared to employ to supply the vacancy, brought about an incident which in its piteous pathos exceeds any story we have ever heard. Crimes and criminals are swept away by time, nature finds an antidote for their poison, and they and their ill consequences alike are blotted out and perish. If we do not forgive them, at least we cease to hate them, as it grows more clear to us that they injured none so deeply as themselves. But the θηριώδης κακία, the enormous wickedness by which humanity itself has been outraged and disgraced, we cannot forgive, we cannot cease to hate that; the years roll away, but the tints of it remain on the pages of history, deep and horrible as the day on which they were entered there.

"When the Spaniards understood the simple opinion of the Yucaian islanders concerning the souls of their departed, which, after their sins purged in the cold northern mountains should pass into the south, to the intent that, leaving their own country of their own accord, they might suffer themselves to be brought to Hispaniola, they did persuade those poor wretches, that they came from those places where they should see their parents and children, and all their kindred and friends that were dead, and should enjoy all kinds of delights with the embracements and fruition of all beloved beings. And they, being infected

and possessed with these crafty and subtle imaginations, singing and rejoicing left their country, and followed vain and idle hope. But when they saw that they were deceived, and neither met their parents nor any that they desired, but were compelled to undergo grievous sovereignty and command, and to endure cruel and extreme labour, they either slew themselves, or, choosing to famish, gave up their fair spirits, being persuaded by no reason or violence to take food. So these miserable Yucaians came to their end."

It was once more as it was in the days of the apostles. The New World was first offered to the holders of the old traditions. They were the husbandmen first chosen for the new vineyard, and blood and desolation were the only fruits which they reared upon it. In their hands it was becoming a kingdom not of God, but of the devil, and a sentence of blight went out against them and against their works. How fatally it has worked, let modern Spain and Spanish America bear witness. We need not follow further the history of their dealings with the Indians. For their colonies, a fatality appears to have followed all attempts at Catholic colonization. Like shoots from an old decaying tree which no skill and no care can rear, they were planted, and for a while they might seem to grow; but their life was never more than a lingering death, a failure, which to a thinking person would outweigh in the arguments against Catholicism whole libraries of faultless *catenas*, and a *consensus patrum* unbroken through fifteen centuries for the supremacy of St. Peter.

There is no occasion to look for superstitious causes to explain it. The Catholic faith had ceased to be the faith of the large mass of earnest thinking capable persons; and to those who can best do the work, all work in this world sooner or later is committed. America was the natural home for Protestants; persecuted at home, they sought a place where they might worship God in their own way, without danger of stake or gibbet, and the French Huguenots, as after-

wards the English Puritans, early found their way there. The fate of a party of Coligny's people, who had gone out as settlers, shall be the last of these stories, illustrating, as it does in the highest degree, the wrath and fury with which the passions on both sides were boiling. A certain John Ribault, with about 400 companions, had emigrated to Florida. They were quiet inoffensive people, and lived in peace there several years, cultivating the soil, building villages, and on the best possible terms with the natives. Spain was at the time at peace with France; we are, therefore, to suppose that it was in pursuance of the great crusade, in which they might feel secure of the secret, if not the confessed, sympathy of the Guises, that a powerful Spanish fleet bore down upon this settlement. The French made no resistance, and they were seized and flayed alive, and their bodies hung out upon the trees, with an inscription suspended over them, "Not as Frenchmen, but as heretics." At Paris all was sweetness and silence. The settlement was tranquilly surrendered to the same men who had made it the scene of their atrocity; and two years later, 500 of the very Spaniards who had been most active in the murder were living there in peaceable possession, in two forts which their relation with the natives had obliged them to build. It was well that there were other Frenchmen living, of whose consciences the Court had not the keeping, and who were able on emergencies to do what was right without consulting it. A certain privateer named Dominique de Gourges, secretly armed and equipped a vessel at Rochelle, and, stealing across the Atlantic and in two days collecting a strong party of Indians, he came down suddenly upon the forts, and, taking them by storm, slew or afterwards hanged every man he found there, leaving their bodies on the trees on which they had hanged the Huguenots, with their own inscription reversed against them,—"Not as Spaniards, but as murderers." For which exploit, well deserving of all honest men's praise, Dominique de Gourges had to fly his country for his life; and, coming

to England, was received with honourable welcome by Elizabeth.

It was at such a time, and to take their part amidst such scenes as these, that the English navigators appeared along the shores of South America, as the armed soldiers of the Reformation, and as the avengers of humanity; as their enterprise was grand and lofty, so was the manner in which they bore themselves in all ways worthy of it. They were no nation of saints, in the modern sentimental sense of that word; they were prompt, stern men—more ready ever to strike an enemy than to parley with him; and, private adventurers as they all were, it was natural enough that private foolishness and private badness should be found among them as among other mortals. Every Englishman who had the means was at liberty to fit out a ship or ships, and if he could produce tolerable vouchers for himself, received at once a commission from the Court. The battles of England were fought by her children, at their own risk and cost, and they were at liberty to repay themselves the expense of their expeditions by plundering at the cost of the national enemy. Thus, of course, in a mixed world, there were found mixed marauding crews of scoundrels, who played the game which a century later was played with such effect by the pirates of Tortuga. But we have to remark, first, that such stories are singularly rare; and then, that the victims are never the Indians, never any but the Spaniards or the French, when the English were at war with them; and, on the whole, the conduct and character of the English sailors, considering what they were and the work which they were sent to do, present us all through that age with such a picture of gallantry, disinterestedness, and high heroic energy, as has never been overmatched; the more remarkable, as it was the fruit of no drill or discipline, no tradition, no system, no organized training, but was the free native growth of a noble virgin soil.

Before starting on an expedition, it was usual for the crew and the officers to meet and arrange among them-

selves a series of articles of conduct, to which they bound themselves by a formal agreement, the entire body itself undertaking to see to their observance. It is quite possible that strong religious profession, and even sincere profession, might be accompanied, as it was in the Spaniards, with everything most detestable. It is not sufficient of itself to prove that their actions would correspond with it, but it is one among a number of evidences; and, coming, as they come before us, with hands clear of any blood but of fair and open enemies, their articles may pass at least as indications of what they were.

Here we have a few instances :—

Hawkins's ship's company was, as he himself informs us, an unusually loose one. Nevertheless, we find them "gathered together every morning and evening to serve God;" and a fire on board which only Hawkins's presence of mind prevented from destroying ship and crew together, was made use of by the men as an occasion to banish swearing out of the ship.

"With a general consent of all our company, it was ordained that there should be a palmer or ferula which should be in the keeping of him who was taken with an oath ; and that he who had the palmer should give to every one that he took swearing, a palmada with it and the ferula ; and whosoever at the time of evening or morning prayer was found to have the palmer, should have three blows given him by the captain or the master; and that he should still be bound to free himself by taking another, or else to run in danger of continuing the penalty, which, being executed a few days, reformed the vice, so that in three days together was not one oath heard to be sworn."

The regulations for Luke Fox's voyage commenced thus :—

"For as much as the good success and prosperity of every action doth consist in the due service and glorifying of God, knowing that not only our being and preservation, but the prosperity of all our actions and enterprises do immedi-

ately depend on His Almighty goodness and mercy: it is provided—

"First, that all the company, as well officers as others, shall duly repair every day twice at the call of the bell to hear public prayers to be read, such as are authorized by the church, and that in a godly and devout manner, as good Christians ought.

"Secondly, that no man shall swear by the name of God, or use any profane oath, or blaspheme His holy name."

To symptoms such as these, we cannot but attach a very different value when they are the spontaneous growth of common minds, unstimulated by sense of propriety or rules of the service, or other official influence lay or ecclesiastic, from what we attach to the somewhat similar ceremonials in which, among persons whose position is conspicuous, important enterprises are now and then inaugurated.

We have said as much as we intend to say of the treatment by the Spaniards of the Indian women. Sir Walter Raleigh is commonly represented by historians as rather defective, if he was remarkable at all, on the moral side of his character. Yet Raleigh can declare proudly, that all the time he was on the Oronooko, "neither by force nor other means had any of his men intercourse with any woman there;" and the narrator of the incidents of Raleigh's last voyage acquaints his correspondent "with some particulars touching the government of the fleet, which, although other men in their voyages doubtless in some measure observed, yet in all the great volumes which have been written touching voyages, there is no precedent of so godly severe and martial government, which not only in itself is laudable and worthy of imitation, but is also fit to be written and engraven on every man's soul that coveteth to do honour to his country."

Once more, the modern theory of Drake is, as we said above, that he was a gentleman-like pirate on a large scale, who is indebted for the place which he fills in history to the indistinct ideas of right and wrong prevailing in the unenlightened age in which he lived,

and who therefore demands all the toleration of our own enlarged humanity to allow him to remain there. Let us see how the following incident can be made to coincide with this hypothesis:—

A few days after clearing the channel on his first great voyage, he fell in with a small Spanish ship, which he took for a prize. He committed the care of it to a certain Mr. Doughtie, a person much trusted by, and personally very dear to him, and this second vessel was to follow him as a tender.

In dangerous expeditions into unknown seas, a second smaller ship was often indispensable to success; but many finely-intended enterprises were ruined by the cowardice of the officers to whom such ships were entrusted; who shrank as danger thickened, and again and again took advantage of darkness or heavy weather to make sail for England and forsake their commander. Hawkins twice suffered in this way; so did Sir Humfrey Gilbert; and, although Drake's own kind feeling for his old friend has prevented him from leaving an exact account of his offence, we gather from the scattered hints which are let fall, that he, too, was meditating a similar piece of treason. However, it may or may not have been thus. But when at Port St. Julien, "our General," says one of the crew,—

"Began to inquire diligently of the actions of Mr. Thomas Doughtie, and found them not to be such as he looked for, but tending rather to contention or mutiny, or some other disorder, whereby, without redresse, the success of the voyage might greatly have been hazarded. Whereupon the company was called together and made acquainted with the particulars of the cause, which were found, partly by Mr. Doughtie's own confession, and partly by the evidence of the fact, to be true, which, when our General saw, although his private affection to Mr. Doughtie (as he then, in the presence of us all, sacredly protested) was great, yet the care which he had of the state of the voyage, of the expectation of Her Majesty, and of the honour of his country, did more touch him, as indeed it ought, than the private respect of one man; so that the cause being thoroughly heard, and all things done in good order as near as might be to the

course of our law in England, it was concluded that Mr. Doughtie should receive punishment according to the quality of the offence. And he, seeing no remedy but patience for himself, desired before his death to receive the communion, which he did at the hands of Mr. Fletcher, our minister, and our General himself accompanied him in that holy action, which, being done, and the place of execution made ready, he, having embraced our General, and taken leave of all the company, with prayers for the Queen's Majesty and our realm, in quiet sort laid his head to the block, where he ended his life. This being done, our General made divers speeches to the whole company, persuading us to unity, obedience, love, and regard of our voyage, and for the better confirmation thereof, willed every man the next Sunday following to prepare himself to receive the communion, as Christian brethren and friends ought to do, which was done in very reverent sort, and so with good contentment every man went about his business."

The simple majesty of this anecdote can gain nothing from any comment which we might offer upon it. The crew of a common English ship organizing, of their own free motion, on that wild shore, a judgment hall more grand and awful than any most elaborate law court, with its ermine and black cap, and robes of ceremony for mind as well as body, is not to be reconciled with the pirate theory, which we may as well henceforth put away from us.

Of such stuff were the early English navigators; we are reaping the magnificent harvest of their great heroism; and we may see once more in their history and in what has arisen out of it, that on these deep moral foundations, and on none others, enduring prosperities, of what kind so-ever, politic or religious, material or spiritual, are alone in this divinely-governed world permitted to base themselves and grow. Whereever we find them they are still the same. In the courts of Japan or of China, fighting Spaniards in the Pacific, or prisoners among the Algerines, founding colonies which by and by were to grow into enormous transatlantic republics, or exploring in crazy pinnaces the fierce latitudes of the Polar seas, they are the same

indomitable God-fearing men whose life was one great liturgy. "The ice was strong, but God was stronger," says one of Frobisher's men, after grinding a night and a day among the icebergs, not waiting for God to come down and split them, but toiling through the long hours, himself and the rest fending off the vessel with poles and planks, with death glaring at them out of the ice rocks, and so saving themselves and it. Icebergs were strong, Spaniards were strong, and storms, and corsairs, and rocks, and reefs, which no chart had then noted—they were all strong, but God was stronger, and that was all which they cared to know.

Out of the vast number it is difficult to make wise selections, but the attention floats loosely over generalities, and only individual men can seize it and hold it fast. We shall attempt to bring our readers face to face with some of these men; not, of course, to write their biographies, but to sketch the details of a few scenes, in the hope that they may tempt those under whose eyes they may fall to look for themselves to complete the perfect figure.

Some two miles above the port of Dartmouth, once among the most important harbours in England, on a projecting angle of land which runs out into the river at the head of one of its most beautiful reaches, there has stood for some centuries the Manor House of Greenaway. The water runs deep all the way to it from the sea, and the largest vessels may ride with safety within a stone's throw of the windows. In the latter half of the sixteenth century there must have met, in the hall of this mansion, a party as remarkable as could have been found anywhere in England. Humfrey and Adrian Gilbert, with their half-brother, Walter Raleigh, here, when little boys, played at sailors in the reaches of Long Stream; in the summer evenings doubtless rowing down with the tide to the port, and wondering at the quaint figure-heads and carved prows of the ships which thronged it; or climbing on board, and listening, with hearts beating, to the mariners' tales of the new earth beyond the sunset; and here in later life, matured men,

whose boyish dreams had become heroic action, they used again to meet in the intervals of quiet, and the rock is shown underneath the house where Raleigh smoked the first tobacco. Another remarkable man, of whom we shall presently speak more closely, could not fail to have made a fourth at these meetings. A sailor boy of Sandwich, the adjoining parish, John Davis, showed early a genius which could not have escaped the eye of such neighbours, and in the atmosphere of Greenaway he learned to be as noble as the Gilberts, and as tender and delicate as Raleigh. Of this party, for the present we confine ourselves to the host and owner, Humfrey Gilbert, knighted afterwards by Elizabeth. Led by the scenes of his childhood to the sea and to sea adventures, and afterwards, as his mind unfolded, to study his profession scientifically, we find him as soon as he was old enough to think for himself, or make others listen to him, "amending the great errors of naval sea cards, whose common fault is to make the degree of longitude in every latitude of one common bigness;" inventing instruments for taking observations, studying the form of the earth, and convincing himself that there was a north-west passage, and studying the necessities of his country, and discovering the remedies for them in colonization and extended markets for home manufactures, and insisting with so much loudness on these important matters that they reached the all-attentive ears of Walsingham, and through Walsingham were conveyed to the Queen. Gilbert was examined before the Queen's Majesty and the Privy Council, the record of which examination he has himself left to us in a paper which he afterwards drew up, and strange enough reading it is. The most admirable conclusions stand side by side with the wildest conjectures; and invaluable practical discoveries, among imaginations at which all our love for him cannot hinder us from smiling; the whole of it from first to last saturated through and through with his inborn nobility of nature.

Homer and Aristotle are pressed into service to prove

that the ocean runs round the three old continents, and America therefore is necessarily an island. The gulf stream which he had carefully observed, eked out by a theory of the *primum mobile*, is made to demonstrate a channel to the north, corresponding to Magellan's Straits in the south, he believing, in common with almost every one of his day, that these straits were the only opening into the Pacific, the land to the south being unbroken to the Pole. He prophecies a market in the East for our manufactured linen and calicoes :—

"The Easterns greatly prizing the same, as appeareth in Hester, where the pomp is expressed of the great King of India, Ahasuerus, who matched the coloured clothes wherewith his houses and tents were apparelled, with gold and silver, as part of his greatest treasure."

These and other such arguments were the best analysis which Sir Humfrey had to offer of the spirit which he felt to be working in him. We may think what we please of them. But we can have but one thought of the great grand words with which the memorial concludes, and they alone would explain the love which Elizabeth bore him :—

"Never, therefore, mislike with me for taking in hand any laudable and honest enterprise, for if through pleasure or idleness we purchase shame, the pleasure vanisheth, but the shame abideth for ever.

"Give me leave, therefore, without offence, always to live and die in this mind : that he is not worthy to live at all that, for fear or danger of death, shunneth his country's service and his own honour, seeing that death is inevitable and the fame of virtue immortal, wherefore in this behalf *mutare vel timere sperno*."

Two voyages which he undertook at his own cost, which shattered his fortune, and failed, as they naturally might, since inefficient help or mutiny of subordinates, or other disorders, are inevitable conditions under which more or less great men must be content to see their great thoughts mutilated by the feebleness of their instru-

ments, did not dishearten him, and in June, 1583, a last fleet of five ships sailed from the port of Dartmouth, with commission from the Queen to discover and take possession from latitude 45° to 50° north—a voyage not a little noteworthy, there being planted in the course of it the first English colony west of the Atlantic. Elizabeth had a foreboding that she would never see him again. She sent him a jewel as a last token of her favour, and she desired Raleigh to have his picture taken before he went.

The history of the voyage was written by a Mr. Edward Hayes, of Dartmouth, one of the principal actors in it, and as a composition it is more remarkable for fine writing than any very commendable thought in the author. But Sir Humfrey's nature shines through the infirmity of his chronicler; and in the end, indeed, Mr. Hayes himself is subdued into a better mind. He had lost money by the voyage, and we will hope his higher nature was only under a temporary eclipse. The fleet consisted (it is well to observe the ships and the size of them) of the *Delight*, 120 tons; the barque *Raleigh*, 200 tons (this ship deserted off the Land's End); the *Golden Hinde* and the *Swallow*, 40 tons each; and the *Squirrel*, which was called the frigate, 10 tons. For the uninitiated in such matters, we may add, that if in a vessel the size of the last, a member of the Yacht Club would consider that he had earned a club-room immortality if he had ventured a run in the depth of summer from Cowes to the Channel Islands.

"We were in all," says Mr. Hayes, "260 men, among whom we had of every faculty good choice. Besides, for solace of our own people, and allurement of the savages, we were provided of music in good variety, not omitting the least toys, as morris dancers, hobby horses, and May-like conceits to delight the savage people."

The expedition reached Newfoundland without accident. St. John's was taken possession of, and a colony left there, and Sir Humfrey then set out exploring along the American coast to the south; he himself doing all

the work in his little 10-ton cutter, the service being too dangerous for the larger vessels to venture on. One of these had remained at St. John's. He was now accompanied only by the *Delight* and the *Golden Hinde*, and these two keeping as near the shore as they dared, he spent what remained of the summer, examining every creek and bay, marking the soundings, taking the bearings of the possible harbours, and risking his life, as every hour he was obliged to risk it in such a service, in thus leading, as it were, the forlorn hope in the conquest of the New World. How dangerous it was we shall presently see. It was towards the end of August.

"The evening was fair and pleasant, yet not without token of storm to ensue, and most part of this Wednesday night, like the swan that singeth before her death, they in the *Delight* continued in sounding of drums and trumpets and fifes, also winding the cornets and haughtboys, and in the end of their jollity left with the battell and ringing of doleful knells."

Two days after came the storm; the *Delight* struck upon a bank, and went down in sight of the other vessels, which were unable to render her any help. Sir Humfrey's papers, among other things, were all lost in her; at the time considered by him an irreparable misfortune. But it was little matter; he was never to need them. The *Golden Hinde* and the *Squirrel* were now left alone of the five ships. The provisions were running short, and the summer season was closing. Both crews were on short allowance; and with much difficulty Sir Humfrey was prevailed upon to be satisfied for the present with what he had done, and to lay off for England.

"So upon Saturday, in the afternoon, the 31st of August, we changed our course, and returned back for England, at which very instant, even in winding about, there passed along between us and the land, which we now forsook, a very lion, to our seeming, in shape, hair, and colour; not swimming after the manner of a beast by moving of his feet, but rather sliding upon the water with his whole body, except his legs, in sight, neither yet diving under and again rising as the manner is of whales,

porpoises, and other fish, but confidently showing himself without hiding, notwithstanding that we presented ourselves in open view and gesture to amaze him. Thus he passed along, turning his head to and fro, yawning and gaping wide, with ougly demonstration of long teeth and glaring eyes; and to bidde us farewell, coming right against the *Hinde*, he sent forth a horrible voice, roaring and bellowing as doth a lion, which spectacle we all beheld so far as we were able to discern the same, as men prone to wonder at every strange thing. What opinion others had thereof, and chiefly the General himself, I forbear to deliver. But he took it for *Bonum Omen*, rejoicing that he was to war against such an enemy if it were the devil."

We have no doubt that he did think it was the devil: men in those days believing really that evil was more than a principle or a necessary accident, and that in all their labour for God and for right, they must make their account to have to fight with the devil in his proper person. But if we are to call it superstition, and if this were no devil in the form of a roaring lion, but a mere great seal or sea-lion, it is a more innocent superstition to impersonate so real a power, and it requires a bolder heart to rise up against it and defy it in its living terror, than to sublimate it away into a philosophical principle, and to forget to battle with it in speculating on its origin and nature. But to follow the brave Sir Humfrey, whose work of fighting with the devil was now over, and who was passing to his reward. The 2nd of September the General came on board the *Golden Hinde* "to make merry with us." He greatly deplored the loss of his books and papers; and Mr. Hayes considered that the loss of manuscripts could not be so very distressing, and that there must have been something behind, certain gold ore, for instance, which had perished also—considerations not perhaps of particular value. He was full of confidence from what he had seen, and talked with all eagerness and warmth of the new expedition for the following spring. Apocryphal gold-mines still occupying the minds of Mr. Hayes and others, who were persuaded that Sir Humfrey was keeping to himself some such discovery which he had secretly made, and they

tried hard to extract it from him. They could make nothing, however, of his odd ironical answers, and their sorrow at the catastrophe which followed is sadly blended with disappointment that such a secret should have perished. Sir Humfrey doubtless saw America with other eyes than theirs, and gold-mines richer than California in its huge rivers and savannahs.

"Leaving the issue of this good hope (about the gold)," continues Mr. Hayes, "to God, who only knoweth the truth thereof, I will hasten to the end of this tragedy, which must be knit up in the person of our General, and as it was God's ordinance upon him, even so the vehement persuasion of his friends could nothing avail to divert him from his wilful resolution of going in his frigate; and when he was entreated by the captain, master, and others, his well-wishers in the *Hinde*, not to venture, this was his answer—'I will not forsake my little company going homewards, with whom I have passed so many storms and perils.'"

Albeit, thinks the writer, who is unable to comprehend such high gallantry, there must have been something on his mind of what the world would say of him, "and it was rather rashness than advised resolution to prefer the wind of a vain report to the weight of his own life," for the writing of which sentence we will trust the author, either in this world or the other, has before this done due penance and repented of it.

Two-thirds of the way home they met foul weather and terrible seas, "breaking short and pyramid-wise." Men who had all their lives "occupied the sea" had never seen it more outrageous. "We had also upon our mainyard an apparition of a little fire by night, which seamen do call Castor and Pollux."

"Monday, the ninth of September, in the afternoon, the frigate was near cast away oppressed by waves, but at that time recovered, and giving forth signs of joy, the General, sitting abaft with a book in his hand, cried unto us in the *Hinde* so often as we did approach within hearing, 'We are as near to heaven by sea as by land,' reiterating the same speech, well beseeming a soldier resolute in Jesus Christ, as I can testify that he was. The same Monday

night, about twelve of the clock, or not long after, the frigate being a-head of us in the *Golden Hinde*, suddenly her lights were out, whereof as it were in a moment we lost the sight; and withal our watch cried, 'The General was cast away,' which was too true."

So *stirbt ein Held*. It was a fine end for a mortal man. We will not call it sad or tragic, but heroic and sublime; and if our eyes water as we write it down, it is not with sorrow, but with joy and pride.

"Thus faithfully," concludes Mr. Hayes (in some degree rising above himself), "I have related this story, wherein some spark of the knight's virtues, though he be extinguished, may happily appear; he remaining resolute to a purpose honest and godly as was this, to discover, possess, and reduce unto the service of God and Christian piety, those remote and heathen countries of America. Such is the infinite bounty of God, who from every evil deriveth good, that fruit may grow in time of our travelling in these North-Western lands (as has it not grown?), and the crosses, turmoils, and afflictions, both in the preparation and execution of the voyage, did correct the intemperate humours which before we noted to be in this gentleman, and made unsavoury and less delightful his other manifold virtues.

"Thus as he was refined and made nearer unto the image of God, so it pleased the Divine will to resume him unto Himself, whither both his and every other high and noble mind have always aspired."

Such was Sir Humfrey Gilbert; we know but little more of him, and we can only conjecture that he was still in the prime of his years when the Atlantic swallowed him. Like the gleam of a landscape lit suddenly for a moment by the lightning, these few scenes flash down to us across the centuries; but what a life must that have been of which this was the conclusion! He was one of a race which have ceased to be. We look round for them, and we can hardly believe that the same blood is flowing in our veins. Brave we may still be, and strong perhaps as they, but the high moral grace which made bravery and strength so beautiful is departed from us for ever.

Our space is sadly limited for historical portrait painting; but we must find room for another of that Greenaway party whose nature was as fine as that of Gilbert, and who intellectually was more largely gifted. The latter was drowned in 1583. In 1585 John Davis left Dartmouth on his first voyage into the Polar seas; and twice subsequently he went again, venturing in small ill-equipped vessels of thirty or forty tons into the most dangerous seas. These voyages were as remarkable for their success as for the daring with which they were accomplished, and Davis's epitaph is written on the map of the world, where his name still remains to commemorate his discoveries. Brave as he was, he is distinguished by a peculiar and exquisite sweetness of nature, which, from many little facts of his life, seems to have affected every one with whom he came in contact in a remarkable degree. We find men, for the love of Master Davis, leaving their firesides to sail with him, without other hope or motion; and silver bullets were cast to shoot him in a mutiny; the hard rude natures of the mutineers being awed by something in his carriage which was not like that of a common man. He has written the account of one of his northern voyages himself; one of those, by the by, which the Hakluyt Society have mutilated; and there is an imaginative beauty in it, and a rich delicacy of expression, which is a true natural poetry, called out in him by the first sight of strange lands and things and people.

To show what he was, we should have preferred, if possible, to have taken the story of his expedition into the South Seas, in which, under circumstances of singular difficulty, he was deserted by Candish, under whom he had sailed; and after inconceivable trials, from famine, mutiny, and storm, ultimately saved himself and his ship, and such of the crew as had chosen to submit to his orders. But it is a long history, and will not admit of being mutilated. As an instance of the stuff of which it was composed, he ran back in the black night in a gale of wind through the Straits of Magellan, *by a chart which he had made with the eye in passing up*. His

anchors were lost or broken; the cables were parted. He could not bring up the ship; there was nothing for it but to run, and he carried her safe through along a channel often not three miles broad, sixty miles from end, and twisting like the reaches of a river. For the present, however, we are forced to content ourselves with a few sketches out of the north-west voyages. Here is one, for instance, which shows how an Englishman could deal with the Indians. Davis had landed at Gilbert's Sound, and gone up the country exploring. On his return, he found his crew loud in complaints of the thievish propensities of the natives, and urgent to have an example made of some of them. On the next occasion he fired a gun at them with blank cartridge; but their nature was still too strong for them.

"Seeing iron," he says, "they could in no case forbear stealing; which, when I perceived, it did but minister to me occasion of laughter to see their simplicity, and I willed that they should not be hardly used, but that our company should be more diligent to keep their things, supposing it to be very hard in so short a time to make them know their evils."

In his own way, however, he took an opportunity of administering a lesson to them of a more wholesome kind than could be given with gunpowder and bullets Like the rest of his countrymen, he believed the savage Indians in their idolatries to be worshippers of the devil. "They are witches," he says; "they have images in great store, and use many kinds of enchantments." And these enchantments they tried on one occasion to put in force against himself and his crew.

"Being on shore on the 4th day of July, one of them made a long oration, and then kindled a fire, into which with many strange words and gestures he put divers things, which we supposed to be a sacrifice. Myself and certain of my company standing by, they desired us to go into the smoke. I desired them to go into the smoke, which they would by no means do. I then took one of them and thrust him into the smoke, and willed one of my

company to tread out the fire, and spurn it into the sea, which was done to show them that we did contemn their sorceries."

It is a very English story—exactly what a modern Englishman would do; only, perhaps, not believing that there was any real devil in the case, which makes a difference. However, real or not real, after seeing him patiently put up with such an injury, we will hope the poor Greenlander had less respect for the devil than formerly.

Leaving Gilbert's Sound, Davis went on to the north-west, and in lat. 63° fell in with a barrier of ice, which he coasted for thirteen days without finding an opening. The very sight of an iceberg was new to all his crew; and the ropes and shrouds, though it was midsummer, becoming compassed with ice,—

"The people began to fall sick and faint-hearted—whereupon, very orderly, with good discretion, they entreated me to regard the safety of mine own life, as well as the preservation of theirs; and that I should not, through overbouldness, leave their widows and fatherless children to give me bitter curses.

"Whereupon, seeking counsel of God, it pleased His Divine Majesty to move my heart to prosecute that which I hope shall be to His glory, and to the contentation of every Christian mind."

He had two vessels, one of some burthen, the other a pinnace of thirty tons. The result of the counsel which he had sought was, that he made over his own large vessel to such as wished to return, and himself "thinking it better to die with honour than to return with infamy," went on, with such volunteers as would follow him, in a poor leaky cutter, up the sea now called Davis's Straits, in commemoration of that adventure, 4° north of the furthest known point, among storms and icebergs, by which the long days and twilight nights alone saved him from being destroyed, and, coasting back along the American shore, discovered Hudson's

Straits, supposed then to be the long-desired entrance into the Pacific. This exploit drew the attention of Walsingham, and by him Davis was presented to Burleigh, "who was also pleased to show him great encouragement." If either these statesmen or Elizabeth had been twenty years younger, his name would have filled a larger space in history than a small corner of the map of the world; but if he was employed at all in the last years of the century, no *vates sacer* has been found to celebrate his work, and no clue is left to guide us. He disappears; a cloud falls over him. He is known to have commanded trading vessels in the Eastern seas, and to have returned five times from India. But the details are all lost, and accident has only parted the clouds for a moment to show us the mournful setting with which he, too, went down upon the sea.

In taking out Sir Edward Michellthorne to India, in 1604, he fell in with a crew of Japanese, whose ship had been burnt, drifting at sea, without provisions, in a leaky junk. He supposed them to be pirates, but he did not choose to leave them to so wretched a death, and took them on board, and in a few hours, watching their opportunity, they murdered him.

As the fool dieth, so dieth the wise, and there is no difference; it was the chance of the sea, and the ill reward of a humane action—a melancholy end for such a man—like the end of a warrior, not dying Epaminondas-like on the field of victory, but cut off in some poor brawl or ambuscade. But so it was with all these men. They were cut off in the flower of their days, and few indeed of them laid their bones in the sepulchres of their fathers. They knew the service which they had chosen, and they did not ask the wages for which they had not laboured. Life with them was no summer holyday, but a holy sacrifice offered up to duty, and what their Master sent was welcome. Beautiful is old age—beautiful as the slow-dropping mellow autumn of a rich glorious summer. In the old man, nature has fulfilled her work; she loads him with her blessings; she fills him with the fruits of a well-spent life; and, surrounded by his

children and his children's children, she rocks him softly away to a grave, to which he is followed with blessings. God forbid we should not call it beautiful. It is beautiful, but not the most beautiful. There is another life, hard, rough, and thorny, trodden with bleeding feet and aching brow; the life of which the cross is the symbol; a battle which no peace follows, this side the grave; which the grave gapes to finish, before the victory is won; and—strange that it should be so—this is the highest life of man. Look back along the great names of history; there is none whose life has been other than this. They to whom it has been given to do the really highest work in this earth—whoever they are, Jew or Gentile, Pagan or Christian, warriors, legislators, philosophers, priests, poets, kings, slaves—one and all, their fate has been the same—the same bitter cup has been given to them to drink; and so it was with the servants of England in the sixteenth century. Their life was a long battle, either with the elements or with men, and it was enough for them to fulfil their work, and to pass away in the hour when God had nothing more to bid them do. They did not complain, and why should we complain for them? Peaceful life was not what they desired, and an honourable death had no terrors for them. Theirs was the old Grecian spirit, and the great heart of the Theban poet lived again in them:—

> *Θανεῖν δ' οἷσιν ἀνάγκα,*
> *τί κέ τις ἀνώνυμον γῆρας ἐν σκότῳ*
> *καθήμενος ἕψοι μάταν, ἀπάντων*
> *καλῶν ἄμμορος;*

"Seeing," in Gilbert's own brave words, "that death is inevitable, and the fame of virtue is immortal; wherefore in this behalf *mutare vel timere sperno*."

In the conclusion of these light sketches we pass into an element different from that in which we have been lately dwelling. The scenes in which Gilbert and Davis played out their high natures were of the kind which we call peaceful, and the enemies with which

they contended were principally the ice and the wind, and the stormy seas and the dangers of unknown and savage lands; we shall close amidst the roar of cannon, and the wrath and rage of battle. Hume, who alludes to the engagement which we are going to describe, speaks of it in a tone which shows that he looked at it as something portentous and prodigious; as a thing to wonder at—but scarcely as deserving the admiration which we pay to actions properly within the scope of humanity—and as if the energy which was displayed in it was like the unnatural strength of madness. He does not say this, but he appears to feel it; and he scarcely would have felt it, if he had cared more deeply to saturate himself with the temper of the age of which he was writing. At the time all England and all the world rang with the story. It struck a deeper terror, though it was but the action of a single ship, into the hearts of the Spanish people—it dealt a more deadly blow upon their fame and moral strength, than the destruction of the Armada itself; and in the direct results which arose from it, it was scarcely less disastrous to them. Hardly, as it seems to us, if the most glorious actions which are set like jewels in the history of mankind are weighed one against the other in the balance, hardly will those 300 Spartans who in the summer morning sate "combing their long hair—for death" in the passes of Thermopylæ, have earned a more lofty estimate for themselves than this one crew of modern Englishmen.

In August, 1591, Lord Thomas Howard, with six English line-of-battle ships, six victuallers, and two or three pinnaces, were lying at anchor under the Island of Florez. Light in ballast and short of water, with half their men disabled by sickness, they were unable to pursue the aggressive purpose on which they had been sent out. Several of the ships' crews were on shore: the ships themselves "all pestered and rommaging," with everything out of order. In this condition they were surprised by a Spanish fleet consisting of 53 men-of-war. Eleven out of the twelve English ships obeyed

the signal of the Admiral, to cut or weigh their anchors and escape as they might. The twelfth, the *Revenge*, was unable for the moment to follow; of her crew of 190, 90 being sick on shore, and, from the position of the ship, there was some delay and difficulty in getting them on board. The *Revenge* was commanded by Sir Richard Grenville, of Bideford, a man well known in the Spanish seas, and the terror of the Spanish sailors; so fierce he was said to be, that mythic stories passed from lip to lip about him, and, like Earl Talbot or Cœur de Lion, the nurses at the Azores frightened children with the sound of his name. "He was of great revenues," they said, "of his own inheritance, but of unquiet mind, and greatly affected to wars," and from his uncontrollable propensities for blood-eating, he had volunteered his services to the Queen; "of so hard a complexion was he, that I (John Huighen von Linschoten, who is our authority here, and who was with the Spanish fleet after the action) have been told by divers credible persons who stood and beheld him, that he would carouse three or four glasses of wine, and take the glasses between his teeth and crush them in pieces and swallow them down." Such he was to the Spaniard. To the English he was a goodly and gallant gentleman, who had never turned his back upon an enemy, and was remarkable in that remarkable time for his constancy and daring. In this surprise at Florez he was in no haste to fly. He first saw all his sick on board and stowed away on the ballast, and then, with no more than 100 men left him to fight and work the ship, he deliberately weighed, uncertain, as it seemed at first, what he intended to do. The Spanish fleet were by this time on his weather bow, and he was persuaded (we here take his cousin Raleigh's beautiful narrative and follow it in his words) "to cut his mainsail and cast about, and trust to the sailing of the ship."

"But Sir Richard utterly refused to turn from the enemy, alledging that he would rather choose to die than to dis-

honour himself, his country, and her Majesty's ship, persuading his company that he would pass through their two squadrons in spite of them, and enforce those of Seville to give him way, which he performed upon diverse of the foremost, who, as the mariners term it, sprang their luff, and fell under the lee of the *Revenge*. But the other course had been the better; and might right well have been answered in so great an impossibility of prevailing: notwithstanding, out of the greatness of his mind, he could not be persuaded."

The wind was light; the *San Philip*, "a huge high-carged ship" of 1500 tons, came up to windward of him, and, taking the wind out of his sails, ran aboard him.

"After the *Revenge* was entangled with the *San Philip*, four others boarded her, two on her larboard and two on her starboard. The fight thus beginning at three o'clock in the afternoon continued very terrible all that evening. But the great *San Philip*, having received the lower tier of the *Revenge*, shifted herself with all diligence from her sides, utterly misliking her first entertainment. The Spanish ships were filled with soldiers, in some 200, besides the mariners, in some 500, in others 800. In ours there were none at all, besides the mariners, but the servants of the commander and some few voluntary gentlemen only. After many interchanged vollies of great ordnance and small shot, the Spaniards deliberated to enter the *Revenge*, and made divers attempts, hoping to force her by the multitude of their armed soldiers and musketeers; but were still repulsed again and again, and at all times beaten back into their own ship or into the sea. In the beginning of the fight the *George Noble*, of London, having received some shot through her by the *Armadas*, fell under the lee of the *Revenge*, and asked Sir Richard what he would command him; but being one of the victuallers, and of small force, Sir Richard bade him save himself and leave him to his fortune."

A little touch of gallantry, which we should be glad to remember with the honour due to the brave English heart who commanded the *George Noble;* but his name has passed away, and his action is an *in memoriam*, on which time has effaced the writing. All that August night the fight continued, the stars

rolling over in their sad majesty, but unseen through the sulphur clouds which hung over the scene. Ship after ship of the Spaniards came on upon the *Revenge*, "so that never less than two mighty galleons were at her side and aboard her," washing up like waves upon a rock, and falling foiled and shattered back amidst the roar of the artillery. Before morning fifteen several armadas had assailed her, and all in vain; some had been sunk at her side; and the rest, "so ill approving of their entertainment, that at break of day they were far more willing to hearken to a composition, than hastily to make more assaults or entries." "But as the day increased so our men decreased, and as the light grew more and more, by so much the more grew our discomfort, for none appeared in sight but enemies, save one small ship called the *Pilgrim*, commanded by Jacob Whiddon, who hovered all night to see the success, but in the morning bearing with the *Revenge* was hunted like a hare among many ravenous hounds—but escaped."

All the powder in the *Revenge* was now spent, all her pikes were broken, 40 out of her 100 men killed, and a great number of the rest wounded. Sir Richard, though badly hurt early in the battle, never forsook the deck till an hour before midnight; and was then shot through the body while his wounds were being dressed, and again in the head; and his surgeon was killed while attending on him. The masts were lying over the side, the rigging cut or broken, the upper works all shot in pieces, and the ship herself, unable to move, was settling slowly in the sea; the vast fleet of Spaniards lying round her in a ring like dogs round a dying lion, and wary of approaching him in his last agony. Sir Richard seeing that it was past hope, having fought for fifteen hours, and "having by estimation eight hundred shot of great artillery through him," "commanded the master gunner, whom he knew to be a most resolute man, to split and sink the ship, that thereby nothing might remain of glory or victory to the Spaniards; seeing in so many hours they were

not able to take her, having had above fifteen hours time, above ten thousand men, and fifty-three men-of-war to perform it withal; and persuaded the company, or as many as he could induce, to yield themselves unto God and to the mercy of none else; but as they had, like valiant resolute men, repulsed so many enemies, they should not now shorten the honour of their nation by prolonging their own lives for a few hours or a few days."

The gunner and a few others consented. But such δαιμονίη ἀρετὴ was more than could be expected of ordinary seamen. They had dared do all which did become men, and they were not more than men, at least than men were then. Two Spanish ships had gone down, above 1500 men were killed, and the Spanish Admiral could not induce any one of the rest of his fleet to board the *Revenge* again, "doubting lest Sir Richard would have blown up himself and them knowing his dangerous disposition." Sir Richard lying disabled below, the captain finding the Spaniards as ready to entertain a composition as they could be to offer it, gained over the majority of the surviving crew; and the remainder then drawing back from the master gunner, they all, without further consulting their dying commander, surrendered on honourable terms. If unequal to the English in action, the Spaniards were at least as courteous in victory. It is due to them to say, that the conditions were faithfully observed. And "the ship being marvellous unsavourie," Alonzo de Bacon, the Spanish Admiral, sent his boat to bring Sir Richard on board his own vessel.

Sir Richard, whose life was fast ebbing away, replied, that "he might do with his body what he list, for that he esteemed it not; and as he was carried out of the ship he swooned, and reviving again, desired the company to pray for him."

The Admiral used him with all humanity, "commending his valour and worthiness, being unto them a rare spectacle and a resolution seldom approved." The officers of the rest of the fleet, too, John Higgins tells

us, crowded round to look at him, and a new fight had almost broken out between the Biscayans and the "Portugals," each claiming the honour of having boarded the *Revenge*.

"In a few hours Sir Richard, feeling his end approaching, showed not any sign of faintness, but spake these words in Spanish, and said, 'Here die I, Richard Grenville, with a joyful and quiet mind, for that I have ended my life as a true soldier ought to do that hath fought for his country, queen, religion, and honour. Whereby my soul most joyfully departeth out of this body, and shall always leave behind it an everlasting fame of a valiant and true soldier that hath done his duty as he was bound to do.' When he had finished these or other such like words, he gave up the ghost with great and stout courage, and no man could perceive any sign of heaviness in him."

Such was the fight at Florez, in that August of 1591, without its equal in such of the annals of mankind as the thing which we call history has preserved to us; scarcely equalled by the most glorious fate which the imagination of Barrère could invent for the *Vengeur;* nor did it end without a sequel awful as itself. Sea battles have been often followed by storms, and without a miracle; but with a miracle, as the Spaniards and the English alike believed, or without one, as we moderns would prefer believing, "there ensued on this action a tempest so terrible as was never seen or heard the like before." A fleet of merchantmen joined the armada immediately after the battle, forming in all 140 sail; and of these 140, only 32 ever saw Spanish harbour. The rest all foundered, or were lost on the Azores. The men-of-war had been so shattered by shot as to be unable to carry sail, and the *Revenge* herself, disdaining to survive her commander, or as if to complete his own last baffled purpose, like Samson, buried herself and her 200 prize crew under the rocks of St. Michael's.

"And it may well be thought and presumed," says John Huyghen, "that it was no other than a just plague purposely sent upon the Spaniards; and that it might be truly said,

the taking of the *Revenge* was justly revenged on them; and not by the might of force of man, but by the power of God. As some of them openly said in the Isle of Terceira, that they believed verily God would consume them, and that he took part with the Lutherans and heretics . . . . saying further, that so soon as they had thrown the dead body of the Vice-Admiral Sir Richard Grenville overboard, they verily thought that as he had a devilish faith and religion, and therefore the devil loved him, so he presently sunk into the bottom of the sea and down into hell, where he raised up all the devils to the revenge of his death, and that they brought so great a storm and torments upon the Spaniards, because they only maintained the Catholic and Romish religion. Such and the like blasphemies against God they ceased not openly to utter."

# THE BOOK OF JOB

THE question will one day be asked, how it has been that, in spite of the high pretensions of us English to a superior reverence for the Bible, we have done so little in comparison with our continental contemporaries towards arriving at a proper understanding of it? The books named below[1] form but a section of a long list which has appeared in the last few years on the Book of Job alone; and this book has not received any larger share of attention than the others, either of the Old or the New Testament. Whatever be the nature or the origin of these books, (and on this point there is much difference of opinion among the Germans as among ourselves,) they are all agreed, orthodox and unorthodox, that at least we should endeavour to understand them; and that no efforts can be too great, either of research or criticism, to discover their history, or elucidate their meaning.

We shall assent, doubtless, eagerly, perhaps noisily and indignantly, to so obvious a truism; but our own efforts in the same direction will not bear us out. The able men in England employ themselves in matters of a more practical character; and while we refuse to avail ourselves of what has been done elsewhere, no book, or books, which we produce on the interpretation of

[1] 1. *Die poetischen Bücher des Alten Bundes.* Erklärt von Heinrich Ewald. Göttingen: bei Vanderhoeck und Ruprecht. 1836.

2. *Kurzgefasstes exegetisches Handbuch zum Alten Testament.* Zweite Lieferung. *Hiob.* Von Ludwig Hirzel. Zweite Auflage, durchgesehen von Dr. Justus Olshausen. Leipzig. 1852.

3. *Quæstionum in Jobeidos locos vexatos Specimen.* Von D. Hermannus Hupfeld. Halis Saxonum. 1853.

Scripture acquire more than a partial or an ephemeral reputation. The most important contribution to our knowledge on this subject which has been made in these recent years, is the translation of the "Library of the Fathers," by which it is about as rational to suppose that the analytical criticism of modern times can be superseded, as that the place of Herman and Dindorf could be supplied by an edition of the old scholiasts.

It is, indeed, reasonable that, as long as we are persuaded that our English theory of the Bible, as a whole, is the right one, we should shrink from contact with investigations, which, however ingenious in themselves, are based on what we know to be a false foundation. But there are some learned Germans whose orthodoxy would pass examination at Exeter Hall; and there are many subjects, such, for instance, as the present, on which all their able men are agreed in conclusions that cannot rationally give offence to any one. For the Book of Job, analytical criticism has only served to clear up the uncertainties which have hitherto always hung about it. It is now considered to be, beyond all doubt, a genuine Hebrew original, completed by its writer almost in the form in which it now remains to us. The questions on the authenticity of the Prologue and Epilogue, which once were thought important, have given way before a more sound conception of the dramatic unity of the entire poem; and the volumes before us contain merely an inquiry into its meaning, bringing, at the same time, all the resources of modern scholarship and historical and mythological research to bear upon the obscurity of separate passages. It is the most difficult of all the Hebrew compositions—many words occurring in it, and many thoughts, not to be found elsewhere in the Bible. How difficult our translators found it may be seen by the number of words which they were obliged to insert in italics, and the doubtful renderings which they have suggested in the margin. One instance of this, in passing, we will notice in this place—it will be familiar to everyone as the passage quoted at the open-

ing of the English burial service, and adduced as one of the doctrinal proofs of the resurrection of the body: "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter *day* upon the earth; and *though*, after my skin *worms* destroy this *body*, yet in my flesh I shall see God." So this passage stands in the ordinary version. But the words in italics have nothing answering to them in the original—they were all added by the translators to fill out their interpretation; and for *in my flesh*, they tell us themselves in the margin that we may read (and, in fact, we ought to read, and must read) "*out of*," or "*without*" *my flesh*. It is but to write out the verses omitting the conjectural additions, and making that one small, but vital correction, to see how frail a support is there for so large a conclusion; "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and shall stand at the latter . . . upon the earth; and after my skin . . . destroy this . . . ; yet without my flesh I shall see God." If there is any doctrine of a resurrection here, it is a resurrection precisely *not* of the body, but of the spirit. And now let us only add that the word translated Redeemer is the technical expression for the "avenger of blood"; and that the second paragraph ought to be rendered—"and one to come after me (my next of kin, to whom the avenging my injuries belongs) shall stand upon my dust," and we shall see how much was to be done towards the mere exegesis of the text. This is an extreme instance, and no one will question the general beauty and majesty of our translation; but there are many mythical and physical allusions scattered over the poem, which, in the sixteenth century, there were positively no means of understanding; and perhaps, too, there were mental tendencies in the translators themselves which prevented them from adequately apprehending even the drift and spirit of it. The form of the story was too stringent to allow such tendencies any latitude; but they appear, from time to time, sufficiently to produce serious confusion. With these recent assistances, therefore, we propose to say something of the nature of this extraordinary book — a

book of which it is to say little to call it unequalled of its kind, and which will, one day, perhaps, when it is allowed to stand on its own merits, be seen towering up alone, far away above all the poetry of the world. How it found its way into the Canon, smiting as it does through and through the most deeply-seated Jewish prejudices, is the chief difficulty about it now; to be explained only by a traditional acceptance among the sacred books, dating back from the old times of the national greatness, when the minds of the people were hewn in a larger type than was to be found among the pharisees of the great synagogue. But its authorship, its date, and its history, are alike a mystery to us; it existed at the time when the Canon was composed; and this is all that we know beyond what we can gather out of the language and the contents of the poem itself.

Before going further, however, we must make room for a few remarks of a very general kind. Let it have been written when it would, it marks a period in which the religious convictions of thinking men were passing through a vast crisis; and we shall not understand it without having before us clearly something of the conditions which periods of such a kind always and necessarily exhibit.

The history of religious speculation appears in extreme outline to have been of the following kind. We may conceive mankind to have been originally launched into the universe with no knowledge either of themselves or of the scene in which they were placed; with no actual knowledge, but distinguished from the rest of the creation by a faculty of gaining knowledge; and first unconsciously, and afterwards consciously and laboriously, to have commenced that long series of experience and observation which has accumulated in thousands of years to what we now see around us. Limited on all sides by conditions which they must have felt to be none of their own imposing, and finding everywhere forces working, over which they had no control, the fear which they would naturally entertain

of these invisible and mighty agents, assumed, under the direction of an idea which we may perhaps call inborn and inherent in human nature, a more generous character of reverence and awe. The laws of the outer world, as they discovered them, they regarded as the decrees, or as the immediate energies of personal beings; and as knowledge grew up among them, they looked upon it not as knowledge of nature, but of God, or the gods. All early paganism appears, on careful examination, to have arisen out of a consecration of the first rudiments of physical or speculative science. The twelve labours of Hercules are the labours of the sun, of which Hercules is an old name, through the twelve signs. Chronos, or *time*, being measured by the apparent motion of the heavens, is figured as their child; Time, the universal parent, devours its own offspring, yet is again itself in the high faith of a human soul, conscious of its power and its endurance, supposed to be baffled and dethroned by Zeus, or *life;* and so on through all the elaborate theogonies of Greece and Egypt. They are no more than real insight into real phenomena, allegorized as time went on, elaborated by fancy, or idealized by imagination, but never losing their original character.

Thus paganism, in its very nature, was expansive, self-developing, and, as Mr. Hume observed, tolerant; a new god was welcomed to the Pantheon as a new scientific discovery is welcomed by the Royal Society; and the various nations found no difficulty in interchanging their divinities—a new god either representing a new power not hitherto discovered, or one with which they were already familiar under a new name. With such a power of adaptation and enlargement, if there had been nothing more in it than this, such a system might have gone on accommodating itself to the change of times, and keeping pace with the growth of human character. Already in its later forms, as the unity of nature was more clearly observed, and the identity of it throughout the known world, the separate powers were subordinating themselves to a single supreme

king; and, as the poets had originally personified the elemental forces, the thinkers were reversing the earlier process, and discovering the law under the person. Happily or unhappily, however, what they could do for themselves they could not do for the multitude. Phœbus and Aphrodite had been made too human to be allegorized. Humanized, and yet, we may say, only half-humanized, retaining their purely physical nature, and without any proper moral attribute at all, these gods and goddesses remained, to the many, examples of sensuality made beautiful; and, as soon as right and wrong came to have a meaning, it was impossible to worship any more these idealized despisers of it. The human caprices and passions which served at first to deepen the illusion, justly revenged themselves. Paganism became a lie, and perished.

In the meantime, the Jews (and perhaps some other nations, but the Jews chiefly and principally) had been moving forward along a road wholly different. Breaking early away from the gods of nature, they advanced along the line of their moral consciousness; and leaving the nations to study physics, philosophy, and art, they confined themselves to man and to human life. Their theology grew up round the knowledge of good and evil, and God, with them, was the supreme Lord of the world, who stood towards man in the relation of a ruler and a judge. Holding such a faith, to them the toleration of paganism was an impossibility; the laws of nature might be many, but the law of conduct was one; there was one law and one king; and the conditions under which He governed the world, as embodied in the Decalogue or other similar code, were looked upon as iron and inflexible certainties, unalterable revelations of the will of an unalterable Being. So far there was little in common between this process and the other; but it was identical with it in this one important feature, that moral knowledge, like physical, admitted of degrees; and the successive steps of it were only purchaseable by experience. The dispensation of the

law, in the language of modern theology, was not the dispensation of grace, and the nature of good and evil disclosed itself slowly as men were able to comprehend it. Thus, no system of law or articles of belief were or could be complete and exhaustive for all time. Experience accumulates; new facts are observed, new forces display themselves, and all such formulæ must necessarily be from period to period broken up and moulded afresh. And yet the steps already gained are a treasure so sacred, so liable are they at all times to be attacked by those lower and baser elements in our nature which it is their business to hold in check, that the better part of mankind have at all times practically regarded their creed as a sacred total to which nothing may be added, and from which nothing may be taken away; the suggestion of a new idea is resented as an encroachment, punished as an insidious piece of treason, and resisted by the combined forces of all common practical understandings, which know too well the value of what they have, to risk the venture upon untried change. Periods of religious transition, therefore, when the advance has been a real one, always have been violent, and probably will always continue to be so. They to whom the precious gift of fresh light has been given are called upon to exhibit their credentials as teachers in suffering for it. They, and those who oppose them, have alike a sacred cause; and the fearful spectacle arises of earnest, vehement men, contending against each other as for their own souls, in fiery struggle. Persecutions come, and martyrdoms, and religious wars; and, at last, the old faith, like the phœnix, expires upon its altar, and the new rises out of the ashes.

Such, in briefest outline, has been the history of religions, natural and moral; the first, indeed, being in no proper sense a religion at all, as we understand religion; and only assuming the character of it in the minds of great men whose moral sense *had* raised them beyond their time and country, and who, feeling the necessity of a real creed, with an effort and with indifferent success, endeavoured to express, under the

systems which they found, emotions which had no proper place there.

Of the transition periods which we have described as taking place under the religion which we call moral, the first known to us is marked at its opening by the appearance of the Book of Job, the first fierce collision of the new fact with the formula which will not stretch to cover it.

The earliest phenomenon likely to be observed connected with the moral government of the world is the general one, that on the whole, as things are constituted, good men prosper and are happy, bad men fail and are miserable. The cause of such a condition is no mystery, and lies very near the surface. As soon as men combine in society, they are forced to obey certain laws under which alone society is possible, and these laws, even in their rudest form, approach the laws of conscience. To a certain extent, every one is obliged to sacrifice his private inclinations; and those who refuse to do so are punished, or are crushed. If society were perfect, the imperfect tendency would carry itself out till the two sets of laws were identical; but perfection so far has been only in Utopia, and as far as we can judge by experience hitherto, they have approximated most nearly in the simplest and most rudimentary forms of life. Under the systems which we call patriarchal, the modern distinctions between sins and crimes had no existence. All gross sins were offences against society, as it then was constituted, and, wherever it was possible, were punished as being so; chicanery and those subtle advantages which the acute and unscrupulous can take over the simple, without open breach of enacted statutes, were only possible under the complications of more artificial polities; and the oppression or injury of man by man was open, violent, obvious, and therefore easily understood. Doubtless, therefore, in such a state of things, it would, on the whole, be true to experience, that, judging merely by outward prosperity or the reverse, good and bad men would be rewarded and punished as such in this actual world; so far, that is,

as the administration of such rewards and punishments was left in the power of mankind. But theology could not content itself with general tendencies. Theological propositions then, as much as now, were held to be absolute, universal, admitting of no exceptions, and explaining every phenomenon. Superficial generalizations were construed into immutable decrees; the God of this world was just and righteous, and temporal prosperity or wretchedness were dealt out by him immediately by his own will to his subjects, according to their behaviour. Thus the same disposition towards completeness which was the ruin of paganism, here, too, was found generating the same evils; the half truth rounding itself out with falsehoods. Not only the consequence of ill actions which followed through themselves, but the accidents, as we call them, of nature, earthquakes, storms, and pestilences, were the ministers of God's justice, and struck sinners only with discriminating accuracy. That the sun should shine alike on the evil and the good was a creed too high for the early divines, or that the victims of a fallen tower were no greater offenders than their neighbours. The conceptions of such men could not pass beyond the outward temporal consequence; and, if God's hand was not there it was nowhere. We might have expected that such a theory of things could not long resist the accumulated contradictions of experience; but the same experience shows also what a marvellous power is in us of thrusting aside phenomena which interfere with our cherished convictions; and when such convictions are consecrated into a creed which it is a sacred duty to believe, experience is but like water dropping upon a rock, which wears it away, indeed, at last, but only in thousands of years. This theory was and is the central idea of the Jewish polity, the obstinate toughness of which has been the perplexity of Gentiles and Christians from the first dawn of its existence; it lingers among ourselves in our Liturgy and in the popular belief; and in spite of the emphatic censure of Him after whose name we call ourselves, is still the instant interpreter

for us of any unusual calamity, a potato blight, a famine, or an epidemic: such vitality is there in a moral faith, though now, at any rate, contradicted by the experience of all mankind, and at issue even with Christianity itself.

At what period in the world's history misgivings about it began to show themselves it is now impossible to say; it was at the close, probably, of the patriarchal period, when men who really *thought* must have found it palpably shaking under them. Indications of such misgivings are to be found in the Psalms, those especially passing under the name of Asaph; and all through Ecclesiastes there breathes a spirit of deepest and saddest scepticism. But Asaph thrusts his doubts aside, and forces himself back into his old position; and the scepticism of Ecclesiastes is confessedly that of a man who had gone wandering after enjoyment; searching after pleasures—pleasures of sense and pleasures of intellect—and who, at last, bears reluctant testimony that, by such methods, no pleasures can be found which will endure; that he had squandered the power which might have been used for better things, and had only strength remaining to tell his own sad tale as a warning to mankind. There is nothing in Ecclesiastes like the misgivings of a noble nature. The writer's own personal happiness had been all for which he had cared; he had failed, as all men gifted as he was gifted are sure to fail, and the lights of heaven had been extinguished by the disappointment with which his own spirit was clouded.

Utterly different from these, both in character and in the lesson which it teaches, is the Book of Job. Of unknown date, as we said, and unknown authorship, the language impregnated with strange idioms and strange allusions, unjewish in form, and in fiercest hostility with Judaism, it hovers like a meteor over the old Hebrew literature, in it, but not of it, compelling the acknowledgment of itself by its own internal majesty, yet exerting no influence over the minds of the people, never alluded to, and scarcely ever quoted, till at last

the light which it had heralded rose up full over the world in Christianity.

The conjectures which have been formed upon the date of it are so various, that they show of themselves on how slight a foundation the best of them must rest. The language is no guide, for although unquestionably of Hebrew origin, it bears no analogy to any of the other books in the Bible; while, of its external history, nothing is known at all, except that it was received into the Canon at the time of the great synagogue. Ewald decides, with some confidence, that it belongs to the great prophetic period, and that the writer was a contemporary of Jeremiah. Ewald is a high authority in these matters, and this opinion is the one which we believe is now commonly received among biblical scholars. In the absence of proof, however, (and the reasons which he brings forward are really no more than conjectures) these opposite considerations may be of moment. It is only natural that at first thought we should ascribe the grandest poem in a literature to the time at which the poetry of the nation to which it belongs was generally at its best: but, on reflection, the time when the poetry of prophecy is the richest, is not likely to be favourable to compositions of another kind. The prophets wrote in an era of decrepitude, dissolution, sin, and shame, when the glory of Israel was falling round them into ruin, and their mission, glowing as they were with the ancient spirit, was to rebuke, to warn, to threaten, and to promise. Finding themselves too late to save, and only, like Cassandra, despised and disregarded, their voices rise up singing the swan song of a dying people, now falling away in the wild wailing of despondency over the shameful and desperate present, now swelling in triumphant hope that God will not leave them forever, and in his own time will take his chosen to himself again. But such a period is an ill-occasion for searching into the broad problems of human destiny; the present is all-important and all-absorbing; and such a book as that of Job could have arisen only out of an isolation of mind, and

life, and interest, which we cannot conceive of as possible.

The more it is studied, the more the conclusion forces itself upon us that, let the writer have lived when he would, in his struggle with the central falsehood of his own people's creed, he must have divorced himself from them outwardly as well as inwardly; that he travelled away into the world, and lived long, perhaps all his matured life, in exile. Everything about the book speaks of a person who had broken free from the narrow littleness of "the peculiar people." The language, as we said, is full of strange words. The hero of the poem is of strange land and parentage, a Gentile certainly, not a Jew. The life, the manners, the customs, are of all varieties and places—Egypt, with its river and its pyramids, is there; the description of mining points to Phœnicia; the settled life in cities, the nomad Arabs, the wandering caravans, the heat of the tropics, and the ice of the north, all are foreign to Canaan, speaking of foreign things and foreign people. No mention, or hint of mention, is there throughout the poem, of Jewish traditions or Jewish certainties. We look to find the three friends vindicate themselves, as they so well might have done, by appeals to the fertile annals of Israel, to the Flood, to the cities of the plain, to the plagues of Egypt, or the thunders of Sinai. But of all this there is not a word; they are passed by as if they had no existence; and instead of them, when witnesses are required for the power of God, we have strange un-Hebrew stories of the eastern astronomic mythology, the old wars of the giants, the imprisoned Orion, the wounded dragon, "the sweet influences of the seven stars," and the glittering fragments of the sea-snake Rahab trailing across the northern sky. Again, God is not the God of Israel, but the father of mankind; we hear nothing of a chosen people, nothing of a special revelation, nothing of peculiar privileges; and in the court of heaven there is a Satan, not the prince of this world and the enemy of God, but the angel of judgment, the accusing spirit whose mission

was to walk to and fro over the earth, and carry up to heaven an account of the sins of mankind. We cannot believe that thoughts of this kind arose out of Jerusalem in the days of Josiah. In this book, if anywhere, we have the record of some ἀνὴρ πολύτροπος who, like the old hero of Ithaca,

> πολλῶν ἀνθρώπων ἴδεν ἄστεα καὶ νόον ἔγνω,
> πολλὰ δ' ὅγ' ἐν πόντῳ πάθεν ἄλγεα ὃν κατὰ θυμόν,
> ἀρνύμενος ψυχήν . . .

but the scenes, the names, and the incidents, are all contrived as if to baffle curiosity, as if, in the very form of the poem, to teach us that it is no story of a single thing which happened once, but that it belongs to humanity itself, and is the drama of the trial of man, with Almighty God and the angels as the spectators of it.

No reader can have failed to have been struck with the simplicity of the opening. Still, calm, and most majestic, it tells us everything which is necessary to be known in the fewest possible words. The history of Job was probably a tradition in the east; his name, like that of Priam in Greece, the symbol of fallen greatness, and his misfortunes the problem of philosophers. In keeping with the current belief, he is described as a model of excellence, the most perfect and upright man upon the earth, "and the same was the greatest man in all the east." So far, greatness and goodness had gone hand in hand together, as the popular theory required. The details of his character are brought out in the progress of the poem. He was "the father of the oppressed, and of those who had none to help them." When he sat as a judge in the market-places, "righteousness clothed him" there, and "his justice was a robe and a diadem." He "broke the jaws of the wicked and plucked the spoil out of his teeth;" and, humble in the midst of his power, he "did not despise the cause of his manservant, or his maidservant, when they contended with him," knowing (and amidst those

old people where the multitude of mankind were regarded as the born slaves of the powerful, to be carved into eunuchs or polluted into concubines at their master's pleasure, it was no easy matter to know it) knowing "that He who had made him had made them," and *one* "had fashioned them both in the womb." Above all, he was the friend of the poor, "the blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon him," and he "made the widow's heart to sing for joy."

Setting these characteristics of his daily life by the side of his unaffected piety, as it is described in the first chapter, we have a picture of the best man who could then be conceived; not a hard ascetic, living in haughty or cowardly isolation, but a warm figure of flesh and blood, a man full of all human loveliness, and to whom, that no room might be left for any possible Calvinistic falsehood, God himself bears the emphatic testimony, "that there was none like him upon the earth, a perfect and upright man, who feared God and eschewed evil." If such a person as this, therefore, could be made miserable, necessarily the current belief of the Jews was false to the root; and tradition furnished the fact that he had been visited by every worst calamity. How was it then to be accounted for? Out of a thousand possible explanations, the poet introduces a single one. He admits us behind the veil which covers the ways of Providence, and we hear the accusing angel charging Job with an interested piety, and of being obedient because it was his policy. "Job does not serve God for nought," he says; "strip him of his splendour, and see if he will care for God then. Humble him into poverty and wretchedness, so only we shall know what is in his heart." The cause thus introduced is itself a rebuke to the belief which, with its "rewards and punishments," immediately fostered selfishness; and the poem opens with a double action, on one side to try the question whether it is possible for man to love God disinterestedly—the issue of which trial is not foreseen or even foretold, and we watch the

progress of it with an anxious and fearful interest—on the other side, to bring out in contrast to the truth which we already know, the cruel falsehood of the popular faith, to show how, instead of leading men to mercy and affection, it hardens their heart, narrows their sympathies, and enhances the trials of the sufferer, by refinements which even Satan had not anticipated. The combination of evils, as blow falls on blow, suddenly, swiftly, and terribly, has all the appearance of a purposed visitation (as indeed it was;) if ever outward incidents might with justice be interpreted as the immediate action of Providence, those which fell on Job might be so interpreted. The world turns disdainfully from the fallen in the world's way; but far worse than this, his chosen friends, wise, good, pious men, as wisdom and piety were then, without one glimpse of the true cause of his sufferings, see in them a judgment upon his secret sins. He becomes to them an illustration, and even (such are the paralogisms of men of this description) a proof of their theory "that the prosperity of the wicked is but for a while;" and instead of the comfort and help which they might have brought him, and which in the end they were made to bring him, he is to them no more than a text for the enunciation of solemn falsehood. And even worse again, the sufferer himself had been educated in the same creed; he, too, had been taught to see the hand of God in the outward dispensation; and feeling from the bottom of his heart, that he, in his own case, was a sure contradiction of what he had learnt to believe, he himself finds his very faith in God shaken from its foundation. The worst evils which Satan had devised were distanced far by those which had been created by human folly.

The creed in which Job had believed was tried and found wanting, and, as it ever will be when the facts of experience come in contact with the inadequate formula, the true is found so mingled with the false, that they can hardly be disentangled, and are in danger of being swept away together.

A studied respect is shown, however, to this orthodoxy;

even while it is arraigned for judgment. It may be doubtful whether the writer purposely intended it. He probably cared only to tell the real truth; to say for it the best which could be said, and to produce as its defenders the best and wisest men whom in his experience he had known to believe and defend it. At any rate, he represents the three friends, not as a weaker person would have represented them, as foolish, obstinate bigots, but as wise, humane, and almost great men, who, at the outset, at least, are animated only by the kindest feelings, and speak what they have to say with the most earnest conviction that it is true. Job is vehement, desperate, reckless. His language is the wild, natural outpouring of suffering. The friends, true to the eternal nature of man, are grave, solemn, and indignant, preaching their half truth, and mistaken only in supposing that it is the whole; speaking, as all such persons would speak, and still do speak, in defending what they consider sacred truth, against the assaults of folly and scepticism. How beautiful is their first introduction:—

"Now when Job's three friends heard of all this evil which was come upon him, they came every one from his own place, Eliphaz the Temanite, and Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite, for they had made an appointment together to come to mourn with him and to comfort him. And when they lifted up their eyes afar off and knew him not, they lifted up their voices and wept, and they rent every one his mantle, and sprinkled dust upon their heads towards heaven. So they sate down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights, and none spake a word unto him, for they saw that his grief was very great."

What a picture is there! What majestic tenderness! His wife had scoffed at his faith, bidding him leave "God and die." His acquaintance had turned from him. He "had called his servant, and he had given him no answer." Even the children in their unconscious cruelty had gathered round and mocked him, as he lay among the ashes. But "his friends sprinkle dust towards

heaven, and sit silently by him, and weep for him seven days and seven nights upon the ground." That is, they were true hearted, truly loving, devout, religious men, and yet they with their religion, were to become the instruments of the most poignant sufferings, and the sharpest temptations, which he had to endure. So it was, and is, and will be,—of such materials is this human life of ours composed.

And now, remembering the double action of the drama, the actual trial of Job, the result of which is uncertain, and the delusion of these men which is, at the outset, certain, let us go rapidly through the dialogue. Satan's share in the temptation had already been overcome. Lying sick in the loathsome disease which had been sent upon him, his wife, in Satan's own words, had tempted Job, to say, "Farewell to God," think no more of God or goodness, since this was all which came of it; and Job had told her, that she spoke as one of the foolish women. He "had received good at the hand of the Lord, and should he not receive evil?" But now, when real love and real affection appear, his heart melts in him; he loses his forced self-composure, and bursts into a passionate regret that he had ever been born. In the agony of his sufferings, hope of better things had died away. He does not complain of injustice; as yet, and before his friends have stung and wounded him, he makes no questioning of Providence,—but why was life given to him at all, if only for this? And sick in mind and sick in body, but one wish remains to him, that death will come quickly and end all. It is a cry from the very depths of a single and simple heart. But for such simplicity and singleness his friends could not give him credit; possessed beforehand with their idea, they see in his misery only a fatal witness against him; such calamities could not have befallen a man, the justice of God would not have permitted it, unless they had been deserved. Job had sinned and he had suffered, and this wild passion was but impenitence and rebellion.

Being as certain that they were right in this opinion as they were that God Himself existed, that they should

speak what they felt was only natural and necessary; and their language at the outset is all which would be dictated by the tenderest sympathy. Eliphaz opens, the oldest and most important of the three, in a soft, subdued, suggestive strain, contriving in every way to spare the feelings of the sufferer, to the extreme, to which his real love will allow him. All is general, impersonal, indirect, the rule of the world, the order of Providence. He does not accuse Job, but he describes his calamities, and leaves him to gather for himself the occasion which had produced them, and then passes off, as if further to soften the blow, to the mysterious vision in which the infirmity of mortal nature had been revealed to him, the universal weakness which involved both the certainty that Job had shared in it, and the excuse for him, if he would confess and humble himself: the blessed virtue of repentance follows, and the promise that all shall be well.

This is the note on which each of the friends strikes successively, in the first of the three divisions into which the dialogue divides itself, but each with increasing peremptoriness and confidence, as Job, so far from accepting their interpretation of what had befallen him, hurls it from him in anger and disdain. Let us observe (what the Calvinists make of it they have given us no means of knowing,) he will hear as little of the charges against mankind, as of charges against himself. He will not listen to the "corruption of humanity," because in the consciousness of his own innocency, he knows that it is not corrupt: he knows it, and we know it, the divine sentence upon him having been already passed. He will not acknowledge his sin, he cannot repent, for he knows not of what to repent. If he could have reflected calmly, he might have foreseen what they would say. He knew all that as well as they: it was the old story which he had learnt, and could repeat, if necessary, as well as any one: and if it had been no more than a philosophical discussion, touching himself no more nearly than it touched his friends, he might have allowed for the tenacity of opinion in such matters,

and listened to it and replied to it with equanimity. But as the proverb says, "it is ill-talking between a full man and a fasting:" and in him such equanimity would have been but Stoicism or the affectation of it, and unreal as the others' theories. Possessed with the certainty that he had not deserved what had befallen him, harassed with doubt, and worn out with pain and unkindness, he had assumed (and how natural that he should assume it), that those who loved him would not have been hasty to believe evil of him, that he had been safe in speaking to them as he really felt, and that he might look to them for something warmer and more sympathizing than such dreary eloquence. So when the revelation comes upon him of what was passing in them, he attributes it (and now he is unjust to them) to a falsehood of heart, and not to a blindness of understanding. Their sermons, so kindly intended, roll past him as a dismal mockery. They had been shocked (and how true again is this to nature) at his passionate cry for death. "Do ye reprove words?" he says, "and the speeches of one that is desperate, which are as wind?" It was but poor friendship and narrow wisdom. He had looked to them for pity, for comfort, and love. He had longed for it as the parched caravans in the desert for the water-streams, and "his brethren had dealt deceitfully with him," as the brooks, which in the cool winter roll in a full turbid stream; "what time it waxes warm they vanish, when it is hot they are consumed out of their place. The caravans of Tema looked for them, the companies of Sheba waited for them. They were confounded because they had hoped. They came thither and there was nothing." If for once these poor men could have trusted their hearts, if for once they could have believed that there might be "more things in heaven and earth" than were dreamt of in their philosophy—but this is the one thing which they could not do, which the theologian proper never has done or will do. And thus whatever of calmness or endurance, Job alone, on his ash-heap, might have conquered for himself, is all scattered away; and as the

strong gusts of passion sweep to and fro across his heart, he pours himself out in wild fitful music, so beautiful because so true, not answering them or their speeches, but now flinging them from him in scorn, now appealing to their mercy, or turning indignantly to God; now praying for death; now in perplexity doubting whether, in some mystic way which he cannot understand, he may not, perhaps after all, really have sinned, and praying to be shown it; and, then, staggering further into the darkness, and breaking out into upbraidings of the Power which has become so dreadful an enigma to him. "Thou inquirest after my iniquity, thou searchest after my sin, and thou knowest that I am not wicked. Why didst thou bring me forth out of the womb? Oh, that I had given up the ghost, and no eye had seen me. Cease, let me alone. It is but a little while that I have to live. Let me alone, that I may take comfort a little before I go, whence I shall not return to the land of darkness and the shadow of death." In what other poem in the world is there pathos so deep as this? With experience so stern as his, it was not for Job to be calm, and self-possessed, and delicate in his words. He speaks not what he knows, but what he feels; and without fear the writer allows him to throw it out all genuine as it rises, not overmuch caring how nice ears might be offended, but contented to be true to the real emotion of a genuine human heart. So the poem runs on to the end of the first answer to Zophar.

But now with admirable fitness, as the contest goes forward, the relative position of the speakers begins to change. Hitherto Job only had been passionate; and his friends temperate and collected. Now, however, shocked at his obstinacy, and disappointed wholly in the result of their homilies, they stray still further from the truth in an endeavour to strengthen their position, and, as a natural consequence, visibly grow angry. To them Job's vehement and desperate speeches are damning evidence of the truth of their suspicion. Impiety is added to his first sin, and they begin to see in him a rebel against God. At first they had been contented

to speak generally; and much which they had urged was partially true; now they step forward to a direct application, and formally and personally accuse himself. Here their ground is positively false; and with delicate art it is they who are now growing passionate, and wounded self-love begins to show behind their zeal for God; while in contrast to them, as there is less and less truth in what they say, Job grows more and more collected. For a time it had seemed doubtful how he would endure his trial. The light of his faith was burning feebly and unsteadily; a little more and it seemed as if it might have utterly gone out; but at last the storm was lulling; as the charges are brought personally home to him, the confidence in his own real innocence rises against them. He had before known that he was innocent, now he feels the strength which lies in it, as if God were beginning to reveal Himself within him, to prepare the way for the after outward manifestation of Himself.

The friends, as before, repeat one another with but little difference; the sameness being of course intentional, as showing that they were not speaking for themselves, but as representatives of a prevailing opinion. Eliphaz, again, gives the note which the others follow. Hear this Calvinist of the old world. "Thy own mouth condemneth thee, and thine own lips testify against thee. What is man that he should be clean, and he that is born of a woman that he should be righteous? Behold, he putteth no trust in his saints. Yea, the heavens are not clean in his sight; how much more abominable and filthy is man, which drinketh iniquity like water?" Strange, that after all these thousands of years, we should still persist in this degrading confession, as a thing which it is impious to deny, and impious to attempt to render otherwise, when scripture itself, in language so emphatic, declares that it is a lie. Job *is* innocent, perfect, righteous. God Himself bears witness to it. It is Job who is found at last to have spoken truth, and the friends to have sinned in denying it. And he holds fast by his innocency, and with a generous

confidence puts away the misgivings which had begun to cling to him. Among his complainings he had exclaimed, that God was remembering upon him the sins of his youth—not denying them—knowing well, that he, like others, had gone astray before he had learnt to control himself, but feeling that at least in an earthly father it is unjust to visit the faults of childhood on the matured man; feeling that he had long, long shaken them off from him, and they did not even impair the probity of his after life. But now these doubts, too, pass away in the brave certainty that God is not less just than man. As the denouncings grow louder and darker, he appeals from his narrow judges to the Supreme Tribunal, calls on God to hear him and to try his cause—and, then, in the strength of this appeal his eye grows clearer still. His sickness is mortal: he has no hope in life, and death is near, but the intense feeling that justice must and will be done, holds to him closer and closer. God may appear on earth for him; or if that be too bold a hope, and death finds him as he is—what is death, then? God will clear his memory in the place where he lived; his injuries will be righted over his grave; while for himself, like a sudden gleam of sunlight between clouds, a clear, bright hope beams up, that he too, then, in another life, if not in this, when his skin is wasted off his bones, and the worms have done their work on the prison of his spirit, he, too, at last may then see God; may see Him, and have his pleadings heard.

With such a hope, or even the shadow of one, he turns back to the world again to look at it. Facts against which he had before closed his eyes he allows and confronts, and he sees that his own little experience is but the reflection of a law. You tell me, he seems to say, that the good are rewarded, and that the wicked are punished, that God is just, and that this is always so. Perhaps it is, or will be, but not in the way which you imagine. You have known me, you have known what my life has been; you see what I am, and it is no difficulty to you. You prefer believing that I, whom

you call your friend, am a deceiver or a pretender, to admitting the possibility of the falsehood of your hypothesis. You will not listen to my assurance, and you are angry with me because I will not lie against my own soul, and acknowledge sins which I have not committed. You appeal to the course of the world in proof of your faith, and challenge me to answer you. Well, then, I accept your challenge. The world is not what you say. You have told me what you have seen of it. I will tell you what I have seen.

"Even while I remember I am afraid, and trembling taketh hold upon my flesh. Wherefore do the wicked become old, yea, and are mighty in power. Their seed is established in their sight with them, and their offspring before their eyes. Their houses are safe from fear, neither is the rod of God upon them. Their bull gendereth and faileth not; their cow calveth and casteth not her calf. They send forth their little ones like a flock, and their children dance. They take the timbrel and harp, and rejoice at the sound of the organ. They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down into the grave. Therefore they say unto God, Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways. What is the Almighty that we should serve him? and what profit should we have if we pray to him?"

Will you quote the weary proverb? Will you say that "God layeth up his iniquity for his children?" (our translators have wholly lost the sense of this passage, and endeavour to make Job acknowledge what he is steadfastly denying). Well, and what then? What will he care? "Will his own eye see his own fall? Will he drink the wrath of the Almighty? What are the fortunes of his house to him if the number of his own months is fulfilled?" One man is good and another wicked, one is happy and another is miserable. In the great indifference of nature they share alike in the common lot. "They lie down alike in the dust, and the worms cover them." Ewald, and many other critics, suppose that Job was hurried away by his feelings to say all this; and that

in his calmer moments he must have felt that it was untrue. It is a point on which we must decline accepting even Ewald's high authority. Even then in those old times it was beginning to be terribly true. Even then the current theory was obliged to bend to large exceptions; and what Job saw as exceptions we see round us everywhere. It was true then, it is infinitely more true now, that what is called virtue in the common sense of the word, still more that nobleness, godliness, or heroism of character in any form whatsoever, have nothing to do with this or that man's prosperity, or even happiness. The thoroughly vicious man is no doubt wretched enough; but the worldly, prudent, self-restraining man, with his five senses, which he understands how to gratify with tempered indulgence, with a conscience satisfied with the hack routine of what is called respectability, such a man feels no wretchedness; no inward uneasiness disturbs him, no desires which he cannot gratify; and this though he be the basest and most contemptible slave of his own selfishness. Providence will not interfere to punish him. Let him obey the laws under which prosperity is obtainable, and he will obtain it; let him never fear He will obtain it, be he base or noble. Nature is indifferent; the famine, and the earthquake, and the blight, or the accident, will not discriminate to strike him. He may insure himself against those in these days of ours: with the money perhaps which a better man would have given away, and he will have his reward. He need not doubt it.

And again, it is not true, as optimists would persuade us, that such prosperity brings no real pleasure. A man with no high aspirations who thrives and makes money, and envelops himself in comforts, is as happy as such a nature can be. If unbroken satisfaction be the most blessed state for a man (and this certainly is the practical notion of happiness) he is the happiest of men. Nor are those idle phrases any truer, that the good man's goodness is a never-ceasing sunshine; that virtue is its own reward. &c. &c. If men truly

virtuous care to be rewarded for it, their virtue is but a poor investment of their moral capital. Was Job so happy then on that ash-heap of his, the mark of the world's scorn, and the butt for the spiritual archery of the theologian, alone in his forlorn nakedness, like some old dreary stump which the lightning has scathed, rotting away in the wind and the rain? Happy! if happiness be indeed what we men are sent into this world to seek for, those hitherto thought the noblest among us were the pitifullest and wretchedest. Surely it was no error in Job. It was that real insight which once was given to all the world in Christianity; however we have forgotten it now. He was learning to see that it was not in the possession of enjoyment, no, nor of happiness itself, that the difference lies between the good and the bad. True, it might be that God sometimes, even generally, gives such happiness in, gives it as what Aristotle calls an ἐπιγιγνόμενον τέλος, but it is no part of the terms on which He admits us to His service, still less is it the end which we may propose to ourselves on entering His service. Happiness He gives to whom He will, or leaves to the angel of nature to distribute among those who fulfil the laws upon which *it* depends. But to serve God and to love Him is higher and better than happiness, though it be with wounded feet, and bleeding brow, and hearts loaded with sorrow. Into this high faith Job is rising, treading his temptations under his feet, and finding in them a ladder on which his spirit rises. Thus he is passing further and ever further from his friends, soaring where their imaginations cannot follow him. To them he is a blasphemer whom they gaze at with awe and terror. They had charged him with sinning, on the strength of their hypothesis, and he has answered with a deliberate denial of it. Losing now all mastery over themselves, they pour out a torrent of mere extravagant invective and baseless falsehoods, which in the calmer outset they would have blushed to think of. They *know* no evil of Job, but they do not hesitate now to convert conjecture into certainty, and specify

in detail the particular crimes which he must have committed. He *ought* to have committed them, and so he had; the old argument then as now.—"Is not thy wickedness great?" says Eliphaz. "Thou hast taken a pledge from thy brother for nought, and stripped the naked of their clothing; thou hast not given water to the weary, and thou hast withholden bread from the hungry;" and so on through a series of mere distracted lies. But the time was past when words like these could make Job angry. Bildad follows them up with an attempt to frighten him by a picture of the power of that God whom he was blaspheming; but Job cuts short his harangue, and ends it for him in a spirit of loftiness which Bildad could not have approached; and then proudly and calmly rebukes them all, no longer in scorn and irony, but in high tranquil self-possession. "God forbid that I should justify you," he says; "till I die I will not remove my integrity from me. My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go. My heart shall not reproach me so long as I live."

So far all has been clear, each party, with increasing confidence, having insisted on their own position, and denounced their adversaries. A difficulty now rises, which, at first sight, appears insurmountable. As the chapters are at present printed, the entire of the twenty-seventh is assigned to Job, and the verses from the eleventh to the twenty-third are in direct contradiction to all which he has maintained before, are, in fact, a concession of having been wrong from the beginning. Ewald, who, as we said above, himself refuses to allow the truth of Job's last and highest position, supposes that he is here receding from it, and confessing what an over precipitate passion had betrayed him into denying. For many reasons, principally because we are satisfied that Job said then no more than the real fact, we cannot think Ewald right; and the concessions are too large and too inconsistent, to be reconciled even with his own general theory of the poem. Another solution of the difficulty is very simple, although, it is to be admitted,

that it rather cuts the knot than unties it. Eliphaz and Bildad have each spoken a third time; the symmetry of the general form requires that now Zophar should speak; and the suggestion, we believe, was first made by Dr. Kennicott, that he did speak, and that the verses in question belong to him. Any one who is accustomed to MSS. will understand easily how such a mistake,—if it be one,—might have arisen. Even in Shakespeare, the speeches in the early editions are, in many instances, wrongly divided, and assigned to the wrong persons. It might have arisen from inadvertence; it might have arisen from the foolishness of some Jewish transcriber, who resolved, at all costs, to drag the book into harmony with Judaism, and make Job unsay his heresy. This view has the merit of fully clearing up the obscurity; another, however, has been suggested by Eichorn, who originally followed Kennicott, but discovered, as he supposed, a less violent hypothesis, which was equally satisfactory. He imagines the verses to be a summary by Job of his adversaries' opinions, as if he said—"Listen now; you know what the facts are as well as I, and yet you maintain this;" and then passed on with his indirect reply to it. It is possible that Eichorn may be right—at any rate, either he is right, or else Dr. Kennicott is. Certainly, Ewald is not. Taken as an account of Job's own conviction, the passage contradicts the burden of the whole poem. Passing it by, therefore, and going to what immediately follows, we arrive at what, in a human sense, is the final climax—Job's victory and triumph. He had appealed to God, and God had not appeared; he had doubted and fought against his doubts, and, at last, had crushed them down. He, too, had been taught to look for God in outward judgments; and when his own experience had shown him his mistake, he knew not where to turn. He had been leaning on a bruised reed, and it had run into his hand, and pierced him. But as soon as in the speeches of his friends he saw it all laid down in its weakness and its false conclusions—when he saw the defenders of it wandering further and further from what he knew to

be true, growing every moment, as if from a consciousness of the unsoundness of their standing ground, more violent, obstinate, and unreasonable, the scales fell more and more from his eyes—he had seen the fact that the wicked might prosper, and in learning to depend upon his innocency he had felt that the good man's support was there, if it was anywhere; and at last, with all his heart, was reconciled to it. The mystery of the outer world becomes deeper to him, but he does not any more try to understand it. The wisdom which can compass that, he knows, is not in man; though man search for it deeper and harder than the miner searches for the hidden treasures of the earth; and the wisdom which alone is possible to him, is resignation to God.

"Where, he cries, shall wisdom be found, and where is the place of understanding. Man knoweth not the price thereof, neither is it found in the land of the living. The depth said, it is not with me; and the sea said, it is not in me. It is hid from the eyes of all living, and kept close from the fowls of the air.[1] God understandeth the way thereof, and He knoweth the place thereof [He, not man, understands the mysteries of the world which He has made]. And unto man He said, Behold the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to depart from evil, that is understanding."

Here, therefore, it might seem as if all was over. There is no clearer or purer faith possible for man; and Job had achieved it. His evil had turned to good; and sorrow had severed for him the last links which bound him to lower things. He had felt that he could do without happiness, that it was no longer essential, and that he could live on, and still love God, and cling to Him. But he is not described as of preternatural, or at all Titanic nature, but as very man, full of all human tenderness and susceptibility. His old life was still

[1] An allusion, perhaps, to the old bird auguries. The birds, as the inhabitants of the air, were supposed to be the messengers between heaven and earth.

beautiful to him. He does not hate it, because he can renounce it; and now that the struggle is over, the battle fought and won, and his heart has flowed over in that magnificent song of victory, the note once more changes: he turns back to earth, to linger over those old departed days, with which the present is so hard a contrast; and his parable dies away in a strain of plaintive, but resigned melancholy. Once more he throws himself on God, no longer in passionate expostulation, but in pleading humility.[1] And then comes (perhaps, as Ewald says, it *could not* have come before) the answer out of the whirlwind. Job had called on Him had prayed that He might appear, that he might plead his cause with Him; and now He comes, and what will Job do? He comes not as the healing spirit in the heart of man; but, as Job had at first demanded, the outward God, the Almighty Creator of the universe, and clad in the terrors and the glory of it. Job, in his first precipitancy, had desired to reason with Him on His government. The poet, in gleaming lines, describes for an answer the universe as it then was

[1] The speech of Elihu, which lies between Job's last words and God's appearance, is now decisively pronounced by Hebrew scholars not to be genuine. The most superficial reader will have been perplexed by the introduction of a speaker to whom no allusion is made, either in the prologue or the epilogue; by a long dissertation, which adds nothing to the progress of the argument; proceeding evidently on the false hypothesis of the three friends, and betraying not the faintest conception of the real cause of Job's suffering. And the suspicions which such an anomaly would naturally suggest are now made certainties, by a fuller knowledge of the language, and the detection of a different hand. The interpolator has unconsciously confessed the feeling which allowed him to take so great a liberty. He, too, possessed with the old Jew theory, was unable to accept in its fulness so great a contradiction to it; and, missing the spirit of the poem, he believed that God's honour could still be vindicated in the old way. "His wrath was kindled" against the friends, because they could not answer Job; and against Job because he would not be answered; and conceiving himself "full of matter," and "ready to burst like new bottles," he could not contain himself, and delivered into the text a sermon on the *Theodice*, such, we suppose, as formed the current doctrine of the time in which he lived.

known, the majesty and awfulness of it; and then asks whether it is this which he requires to have explained to him, or which he believes himself capable of conducting. The revelation acts on Job as the sign of the Macrocosmos on the modern Faust; but when he sinks crushed, it is not as the rebellious upstart, struck down in his pride—for he had himself, partially at least, subdued his own presumption—but as a humble penitent, struggling to overcome his weakness. He abhors himself for his murmurs, and "repents in dust and ashes." It will have occurred to every one that the secret which has been revealed to the reader is not, after all, revealed to Job or to his friends, and for this plain reason: the burden of the drama is not that we do, but that we do not, and cannot, know the mystery of the government of the world, that it is not for man to seek it, or for God to reveal it. We, the readers, are, in this one instance, admitted behind the scenes—for once, in this single case—because it was necessary to meet the received theory by a positive fact, which contradicted it. But the explanation of one case need not be the explanation of another; our business is to do what we know to be right, and ask no questions. The veil which in the Ægyptian legend lay before the face of Isis, is not to be raised; and we are not to seek to penetrate secrets which are not ours.

While, however, God does not condescend to justify His ways to man, He gives judgment on the past controversy. The self-constituted pleaders for Him, the acceptors of His person, were all wrong; and Job, the passionate, vehement, scornful, misbelieving Job, he had spoken the truth; he at least had spoken facts, and they had been defending a transient theory as an everlasting truth.

"And it was so, that after the Lord had spoken these words to Job, the Lord said to Eliphaz the Temanite, my wrath is kindled against thee and against thy two friends; for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath. Therefore take unto you now seven bullocks and seven rams, and go to my servant Job; and

offer for yourselves a burnt-offering. And my servant Job shall pray for you, and him will I accept. Lest I deal with you after your folly, for that ye have not spoken of me the thing which is right, like my servant Job."

One act of justice remains. Knowing as we do, the cause of Job's sufferings, and that as soon as his trial was over, it was no longer operative, our sense of fitness could not be satisfied unless he were indemnified outwardly for his outward sufferings. Satan is defeated, and his integrity proved; and there is no reason why the general law should be interfered with, which makes good men happy; or why obvious calamities, obviously undeserved, should remain any more unremoved. Perhaps, too, a deeper lesson still lies below his restoration —something perhaps of this kind. Prosperity, enjoyment, happiness, comfort, peace, whatever be the name by which we designate that state in which life is to our own selves pleasant and delightful, as long as they are sought or prized as things essential, so far have a tendency to disennoble our nature, and are a sign that we are still in servitude and selfishness. Only when they lie outside us, as ornaments merely to be worn or laid aside as God pleases, only then may such things be possessed with impunity. Job's heart in early times had clung to them more than he knew, but now he was purged clean, and they were restored because he had ceased to need them.

Such in outline is this wonderful poem. With the material of which it is woven we have not here been concerned, although it is so rich and pregnant, that we might with little difficulty construct out of it a complete picture of the world as then it was: its life, knowledge, arts, habits, superstitions, hopes, and fears. The subject is the problem of all mankind, and the composition embraces no less wide a range. But what we are here most interested upon, is the epoch which it marks in the progress of mankind, as the first recorded struggle of a new experience with an established orthodox belief. True, for hundreds of years, perhaps for a

thousand, the superstition against which it was directed continued; when Christ came it was still in its vitality. Nay, as we saw, it is alive, or in a sort of mock life, among us at this very day. But even those who retained their imperfect belief had received into their canon a book which treated it with contumely and scorn, so irresistible was the lofty majesty of truth.

In days like these, when we hear so much of progress, it is worth while to ask ourselves, what advances we have made further in the same direction? and once more, at the risk of some repetition, let us look at the position in which this book leaves us. It had been assumed, that man if he lived a just and upright life, had a right to expect to be happy. Happiness, "his being's end and aim," was his legitimate and covenanted reward. If God therefore was just, such a man would be happy; and inasmuch as God was just, the man who was not happy had not deserved to be. There is no flaw in this argument; and if it is unsound, the fallacy can only lie in the supposed right to happiness. It is idle to talk of inward consolations. Job felt them, but they were not everything. They did not relieve the anguish of his wounds; they did not make the loss of his children, or his friends' unkindness, any the less painful to him.

The poet, indeed, restores him in the book; but in life it need not have been so. He might have died upon his ash-heap as thousands of good men have died, and will die again in misery. Happiness, therefore, is *not* what we are to look for. Our place is to be true to the best which we know, to seek that and do that; and if by "virtue its own reward" be meant that the good man cares only to continue good, desiring nothing more; then it is true and noble. But if virtue be valued, because it is politic, because in pursuit of it will be found most enjoyment and fewest sufferings, then it is not noble any more, and it is turning the truth of God into a lie. Let us do right, and whether happiness come or unhappiness is no very mighty matter. If it come, life will be sweet; if it do not come, life will be bitter

—bitter, not sweet, and yet to be borne. On such a theory alone is the government of this world intelligibly just. The well-being of our souls depends only on what we *are*, and nobleness of character is nothing else but steady love of good, and steady scorn of evil. The government of the world is a problem while the desire of selfish enjoyment survives, and when justice is not done according to such standard (which will not be till the day after doomsday, and not then), self-loving men will still ask, why? and find no answer. Only to those who have the heart to say, we can do without that, it is not what we ask or desire, is there no secret. Man will have what he deserves, and will find what is really best for him, exactly as he honestly seeks for it. Happiness may fly away, pleasure pall or cease to be obtainable, wealth decay, friends fail or prove unkind, and fame turn to infamy; but the power to serve God never fails, and the love of Him is never rejected.

Most of us, at one time or other of our lives, have known something of love—of that only pure love in which no *self* is left remaining. We have loved as children, we have loved as lovers; some of us have learnt to love a cause, a faith, a country; and what love would that be which existed only with a prudent view to after-interests. Surely, there is a love which exults in the power of self-abandonment, and can glory in the privilege of suffering for what is good. *Que mon nom soit flétri, pourvu que la France soit libre*, said Danton; and those wild patriots who had trampled into scorn the faith in an immortal life in which they would be rewarded for what they were suffering, went to their graves as beds, for the dream of a people's liberty. Shall we, who would be thought reasonable men, love the living God with less heart than these poor men loved their phantom? Justice is done; the balance is not deranged. It only seems deranged, as long as we have not learnt to serve without looking to be paid for it.

Such is the theory of life which is to be found in the Book of Job; a faith which has flashed up in all times

and all lands, wherever noble men were to be found, and which passed in Christianity into the acknowledged creed of half the world. The cross was the new symbol, the divine sufferer the great example, and mankind answered to the call, because the appeal was not to what was poor and selfish in them, but to whatever of best and bravest was in their nature. The law of reward and punishment was superseded by the law of love. Thou shalt love God and thou shalt love man; and that was not love—man knew it once—which was bought by the prospect of reward. Times are changed with us now. Thou shalt love God and thou shalt love man, in the hands of a poor Paley, are found to mean no more than, Thou shalt love thyself after an enlightened manner. And the same base tone has saturated not only our common feelings, but our Christian theologies and our Antichristian philosophies. A prudent regard to our future interests, an abstinence from present unlawful pleasures, because they will entail the loss of greater pleasure by-and-by, or perhaps be paid for with pain, this is called virtue now; and the belief that such beings as men can be influenced by any feelings nobler or better, is smiled at as the dream of enthusiasts whose hearts have outrun their understandings. Indeed, he were but a poor lover whose devotion to his mistress lay resting on the feeling that a marriage with her would conduce to his own after comforts. That were a poor patriot who served his country for the hire which his country would give to him. And we should think but poorly of a son who thus addressed his earthly father: "Father, on whom my fortunes depend, teach me to do what pleases thee, that I, obeying thee in all things may obtain those good things which thou hast promised to give to thy obedient children." If any of us who have lived in so poor a faith venture, by-and-by, to put in our claims, Satan will be likely to say of us (with better reason than he did of Job) "Did they serve God for nought, then? Take their reward from them, and they will curse Him to His face." If Christianity had never borne itself more nobly than this, do we suppose that

those fierce Norsemen who had learnt, in the fiery war-songs of the Edda, of what stuff the hearts of heroes are composed, would have fashioned their sword-hilts into crosses, and themselves into a crusading chivalry? Let us not dishonour our great fathers with the dream of it. The Christians, like the stoics and the epicureans, would have lived their little day among the ignoble sects of an effete civilization, and would have passed off and been heard of no more. It was in another spirit that those first preachers of righteousness went out upon their warfare with evil. They preached, not enlightened prudence, but purity, justice, goodness; holding out no promises in this world except of suffering as their great master had suffered, and rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer for His sake. And that crown of glory which they did believe to await them in a life beyond the grave, was no enjoyment of what they had surrendered in life, was not enjoyment at all in any sense which human thought or language can attach to the words; as little like it as the crown of love is like it, which the true lover looks for when at last he obtains his mistress. It was to be with Christ—to lose themselves in Him.

How all this nobleness ebbed away, and Christianity became what we know it, we are partially beginning to see. The living spirit organized for itself a body of perishable flesh: not only the real gains of real experience, but mere conjectural hypotheses current at the day for the solution of unexplained phenomena, became formulæ and articles of faith; again, as before, the living and the dead were bound together, and the seeds of decay were already planted on the birth of a constructed polity. But there was another cause allied to this, and yet different from it, which, though a law of human nature itself, seems now-a-days altogether forgotten. In the rapid and steady advance of our knowledge of material things, we are apt to believe that all our knowledge follows the same law, that it is merely generalized experience, that experience accumulates daily, and, therefore, that "progress of the species," *in all senses*, is an

obvious and necessary fact. There is something which is true in this view mixed with a great deal which is false. Material knowledge, the physical and mechanical sciences, make their way from step to step, from experiment to experiment, and each advance is secured and made good, and cannot again be lost; one generation takes up the general sum of experience where the last laid it down, adds to it what it has the opportunity of adding, and leaves it with interest to the next. The successive positions, as they are gained, require nothing for the apprehension of them but an understanding ordinarily cultivated. Prejudices have to be encountered, but prejudices of opinion merely, not prejudices of conscience or prejudices of self-love, like those which beset our progress in the science of morality. Here we enter upon conditions wholly different, conditions in which age differs from age, man differs from man, and even from himself, at different moments. We all have experienced times when, as we say, we should not know ourselves; some, when we fall below our average level; some, when we are lifted above it, and put on, as it were, a higher nature. At such intervals as these last, (unfortunately, with most of us, of rare occurrence,) many things become clear to us, which before were hard sayings; propositions become alive which, usually, are but dry words. Our hearts seem purer, our motives loftier; our purposes, what we are proud to acknowledge to ourselves. And, as man is unequal to himself, so is man to his neighbour, and period to period. The entire method of action, the theories of human life which in one area prevail universally, to the next are unpractical and insane, as those of this next would have seemed mere baseness to the first, if the first could have anticipated them. One, we may suppose, holds some "greatest nobleness principle," the other some "greatest happiness principle;" and then their very systems of axioms will contradict one another; their general conceptions and their detailed interpretations, their rules, judgments, opinions, practices, will be in perpetual and endless contradiction. Our minds take shape from our hearts,

and the facts of moral experience do not teach their own meaning, but submit to many readings, according to the power of eye which we bring with us.

The want of a clear perception of so important a feature about us, leads to many singular contradictions. A believer in popular Protestantism, who is also a believer in progress, ought, if he were consistent, to regard mankind as growing every day in a more and more advantageous position with respect to the trials of life; and yet if he were asked whether it is easier for him to "save his soul" in the nineteenth century than it would have been in the first or second, or whether the said soul is necessarily better worth saving, he would be perplexed for an answer. There is hardly one of us who, in childhood, has not felt like the Jews to whom Christ spoke, that if he had "lived in the days of the fathers," if he had had their advantages, he would have found duty a much easier matter; and some of us in mature life have felt that, in old Athens, or old republican Rome, in the first ages of Christianity, in the Crusades or at the Reformation, there was a contagious atmosphere of general nobleness, in which we should have been less troubled with the little feelings which cling about us now. At any rate, it is at these rare epochs only that real additions are made to our moral knowledge. At such times, new truths are, indeed, sent down among us, and, for periods longer or shorter, may be seen to exercise an ennobling influence on mankind. Perhaps what is gained on these occasions is never entirely lost. The historical monuments of their effects are at least indestructible; and, when the spirit which gave them birth reappears, their dormant energy awakens again.

But it seems from our present experience of what, in some at least of its modern forms, Christianity has been capable of becoming, that there is no doctrine in itself so pure, but what the poorer nature which is in us can disarm and distort it, and adapt it to its own littleness. The once living spirit dries up into formulæ, and formulæ whether of mass-sacrifice or vicarious

righteousness, or "reward and punishment," are contrived ever so as to escape making over high demands on men. Some aim at dispensing with obedience altogether, and those which insist on obedience rest the obligations of it on the poorest of motives. So things go on till there is no life left at all; till, from all higher aspirations we are lowered down to the love of self after an enlightened manner; and then nothing remains but to fight the battle over again. The once beneficial truth has become, as in Job's case, a cruel and mischievous deception, and the whole question of life and its obligations must again be opened.

It is now some three centuries since the last of such reopenings. If we ask ourselves how much during this time has been actually added to the sum of our knowledge in these matters, what—in all the thousands upon thousands of sermons and theologies, and philosophies with which Europe has been deluged—has been gained for mankind beyond what we have found in this very book of Job for instance; how far all this has advanced us in the "progress of humanity," it were hard, or rather it is easy to answer. How far we have fallen below, let Paley and the rest bear witness; but what moral question can be asked which admits now of a nobler solution than was offered two, perhaps three thousand years ago? The world has not been standing still, experience of man and life has increased, questions have multiplied on questions, while the answers of the established teachers to them have been growing every day more and more incredible. What other answers have there been? Of all the countless books which have appeared, there has been only one of enduring importance, in which an attempt is made to carry on the solution of the great problem. Job is given over into Satan's hand to be tempted; and though he shakes he does not fall. Taking the temptation of Job for his model, Goethe has similarly exposed his Faust to trial, and with him the tempter succeeds. His hero falls from sin to sin, from crime to crime; he becomes a seducer, a murderer, a betrayer, following recklessly

his evil angel wherever he chooses to lead him; and yet, with all this, he never wholly forfeits our sympathy. In spite of his weakness his heart is still true to his higher nature; sick and restless, even in the delirium of enjoyment, he always longs for something better, and he never can be brought to say of evil that it is good. And, therefore, after all, the devil is balked of his prey; in virtue of this one fact, that the evil in which he steeped himself remained to the last hateful to him, Faust is saved by the angels. . . . And this indeed, though Goethe has scarcely dealt with it satisfactorily, is a vast subject. It will be eagerly answered for the established belief, that such cases are its especial province. All men are sinners, and *it* possesses the blessed remedy for sin. But, among the countless numbers of those characters so strangely mixed among us, in which the dark and the bright fibres cross like a meshwork; characters at one moment capable of acts of heroic nobleness, at another, hurried by temptation into actions which even common men may deplore, how many are there who have never availed themselves of the conditions of reconciliation as orthodoxy proffers them, and of such men what is to be said? It was said once of a sinner that to her "much was forgiven for she loved much." But this is language which theology has as little appropriated as the Jews could appropriate the language of Job. It cannot recognise the nobleness of the human heart. It has no balance in which to weigh the good against the evil; and when a great Burns, or a Mirabeau comes before it, it can but tremblingly count up the offences committed, and then, looking to the end, and finding its own terms not to have been complied with, it faintly mutters its anathema. Sin only it can apprehend and judge; and for the poor acts of struggling heroism, "Forasmuch as they were not done, &c., &c., it doubts not but they have the nature of sin."[1]

Something of the difficulty has been met by Goethe,

[1] See the Thirteenth Article.

but it cannot be said that he has resolved it; or at least that he has furnished others with a solution which may guide their judgment. In the writer of the Book of Job there is an awful moral earnestness before which we bend as in the presence of a superior being. The orthodoxy against which he contended is not set aside or denied; he sees what truth is in it; only he sees more than it, and over it, and through it. But in Goethe, who needed it more, inasmuch as his problem was more delicate and difficult, the moral earnestness is not awful, is not even high. We cannot feel that in dealing with sin he entertains any great horror of it; he looks on it as a mistake, as undesirable, but scarcely as more. Goethe's great powers are of another kind; and this particular question, though in appearance the primary subject of the poem, is really only secondary. In substance Faust is more like Ecclesiastes than it is like Job, and describes rather the restlessness of a largely-gifted nature which, missing the guidance of the heart, plays experiments with life, trying knowledge, pleasure, dissipation, one after another, and hating them all; and then hating life itself as a weary, stale, flat, unprofitable mockery. The temper exhibited here will probably be perennial in the world. But the remedy for it will scarcely be more clear under other circumstances than it is at present, and lies in the disposition of the heart, and not in any propositions which can be addressed to the understanding. For that other question how rightly to estimate a human being; what constitutes a real vitiation of character, and how to distinguish, without either denying the good or making light of the evil; how to be just to the popular theories, and yet not to blind ourselves to their shallowness and injustice—that is a problem for us, for the solution of which we are at present left to our ordinary instinct, without any recognized guidance whatsoever.

Nor is this the only problem which is in the same situation. There can scarcely be a more startling contrast between fact and theory, than the conditions under which practically positions of power and influence are

distributed among us, the theory of human worth which the necessities of life oblige us to act upon and the theory which we believe that we believe. As we look around among our leading men, our statesmen, our legislators, the judges on our bench, the commanders of our armies, the men to whom this English nation commits the conduct of its best interests, profane and sacred, what do we see to be the principles which guide our selection? How entirely do they lie beside and beyond the negative tests? and how little respect do we pay to the breach of this or that commandment in comparison with ability? So wholly impossible is it to apply the received opinions on such matters to practice, to treat men known to be guilty of what theology calls deadly sins, as really guilty of them, that it would almost seem we had fallen into a moral anarchy; that ability *alone* is what we regard, without any reference at all, except in glaring and outrageous cases, to moral disqualifications. It is invidious to mention names of living men; it is worse than invidious to drag out of their graves men who have gone down into them with honour, to make a point for an argument. But we know, all of us, that among the best servants of our country, there have been, and there are many, whose lives will not stand scrutiny by the negative tests, and who do not appear very greatly to repent, or to have repented of their sins according to recognized methods.

Once more, among our daily or weekly confessions, which we are supposed to repeat as if we were all of us at all times in precisely the same moral condition, we are made to say that we have done those things which we ought not to have done, and to have left undone those things which we ought to have done. An earthly father to whom his children were day after day to make this acknowledgment would be apt to inquire whether they were trying to do better, whether at any rate they were endeavouring to learn; and if he were told that although they had made some faint attempts to understand the negative part of their duty, yet that of the positive part, of those things which they ought

to do, they had no notions at all, and had no idea that they were under obligation to form any, he would come to rather strange conclusions about them. But really and truly, what practical notions of duty have we beyond that of abstaining from committing sins? Not to commit sin, we suppose, covers but a small part of what is expected of us. Through the entire tissue of our employments there runs a good and a bad. Bishop Butler tells us, for instance, that even of our time there is a portion which is ours, and a portion which is our neighbour's; and if we spend more of it on personal interests than our own share, we are stealing. This sounds strange doctrine; we prefer rather making vague acknowledgments, and shrink from pursuing them into detail. We say vaguely, that in all we do we should consecrate ourselves to God, and our own lips condemn us; for which among us cares to learn the way to do it. The devoir of a knight was understood in the courts of chivalry, the lives of heroic men, pagan and Christian, were once held up before the world as patterns of detailed imitation; and now, when such ideals are wanted more than ever, Protestantism unhappily stands with a drawn sword on the threshold of the inquiry, and tells us that it is impious. The law has been fulfilled for us in condescension to our inherent worthlessness, and our business is to appropriate another's righteousness, and not, like Titans, to be scaling Heaven by profane efforts of our own. Protestants, we know very well, will cry out in tones loud enough at such a representation of their doctrines. But we know also, that unless men may feel a cheerful conviction that they can do right if they try, that they can purify themselves, can live noble and worthy lives, unless this is set before them as *the* thing which they are to do, and *can* succeed in doing, they will not waste their energies on what they know beforehand will end in failure, and if they may not live for God they will live for themselves.

And all this while the whole complex frame of society is a meshwork of duty woven of living fibre, and the condition of its remaining sound is, that every thread of

it of its own free energy shall do what it ought. The penalties of duties neglected are to the full as terrible as those of sins committed; more terrible perhaps, because more palpable and sure. A lord of the land, or an employer of labour, supposes that he has no duty except to keep what he calls the commandments in his own person, to go to church, and to do what he will with his own,—and Irish famines follow, and trade strikes, and chartisms, and Paris revolutions. We look for a remedy in impossible legislative enactments, and there is but one remedy which will avail, that the thing which we call public opinion learn something of the meaning of human nobleness, and demand some approximation to it. As things are we have no idea of what a human being ought to be. After the first rudimental conditions we pass at once into meaningless generalities; and with no knowledge to guide our judgment, we allow it to be guided by meaner principles; we respect money, we respect rank, we respect ability—character is as if it had no existence.

In the midst of this loud talk of progress, therefore, in which so many of us at present are agreed to believe, which is, indeed, the common meeting point of all the thousand sects into which we are split, it is with saddened feelings that we see so little of it in so large a matter. Progress there is in knowledge; and science has enabled the number of human beings capable of existing upon this earth to be indefinitely multiplied. But this is but a small triumph if the ratio of the good and bad, the wise and the foolish, the full and the hungry remains unaffected. And we cheat ourselves with words when we conclude out of our material splendour an advance of the race. One fruit only ou mother earth offers up with pride to her maker—her human children made noble by their life upon her; and how wildly on such matters we now are wandering let this one instance serve to show. At the moment at which we write, a series of letters are appearing in the *Times* newspaper, letters evidently of a man of ability, and endorsed in large type by the

authorities of Printing House Square, advocating the establishment of a free Greek state with its centre at Constantinople, on the ground that the Greek character has at last achieved the qualities essential for the formation of a great people, and that endued as it is with the practical commercial spirit, and taking everywhere rational views of life, there is no fear of a repetition from it of the follies of the age of Pericles. We should rather think there was not: and yet the writer speaks without any appearance of irony, and is saying what he obviously means.

In two things there is progress—progress in knowledge of the outward world, and progress in material wealth. This last, for the present, creates, perhaps, more evils than it relieves; but suppose this difficulty solved, suppose the wealth distributed, and every peasant living like a peer—what then? If this is all, one noble soul outweighs the whole of it. Let us follow knowledge to the outer circle of the universe, the eye will not be satisfied with seeing, nor the ear with hearing. Let us build our streets of gold, and they will hide as many aching hearts as hovels of straw. The well-being of mankind is not advanced a single step. Knowledge is power, and wealth is power; and harnessed, as in Plato's fable, to the chariot of the soul, and guided by wisdom, they may bear it through the circle of the stars. But left to their own guidance, or reined by a fool's hand, they may bring the poor fool to Phaeton's end, and set a world on fire. One real service, and perhaps only one, knowledge alone and by itself will do for us—it can explode existing superstitions. Everything has its appointed time, superstition like the rest; and theologies, that they may not overlive the period in which they can be of advantage to mankind, are condemned, by the conditions of their being, to weave a body for themselves out of the ideas of the age of their birth; ideas which, by the advance of knowledge, are seen to be imperfect or false. We cannot any longer be told that there must be four inspired gospels—neither more nor less—because there are

four winds and four elements. The chemists now count some sixty elements, ultimately, as some of them think, reducible into one; and the gospel, like the wind, may blow from every point under heaven. But effectual to destroy old superstitions, whether it is equally successful in preventing others from growing in their place, is less certain and obvious. In these days of table-turnings, mesmerisms, spirit-rappings, odyle fluids, and millenarian pamphlets selling 80,000 copies among our best-educated classes, we must be allowed to doubt.

Our one efficient political science hinges on self-interest, and the uniform action of *motives* among the masses of mankind — of selfish motives reducible to system. Such philosophies and such sciences would but poorly explain the *rise* of Christianity, of Mahometanism, or of the Reformation. They belong to ages of comparative poverty of heart, when the desires of men are limited to material things; when men are contented to labour, and eat the fruit of their labour, and then lie down and die. While such symptoms remain among us, our faith in progress may remain unshaken; but it will be a faith which, as of old, is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

# THE LIVES OF THE SAINTS

If the enormous undertaking of the Bollandist editors had been completed, it would have contained the histories of 25,000 saints. So many the catholic church acknowledged and accepted as her ideals; as men, who had not only done her honour by the eminence of their sanctity, but who had received while on earth an openly divine recognition of it in gifts of supernatural power. And this vast number is but a selection; the editors chose only out of the mass before them what was most noteworthy and trustworthy, and what was of catholic rather than of national interest. It is no more than a fraction of that singular mythology which for so many ages delighted the Christian world, which is still held in external reverence among the Romanists, and of which the modern historians, provoked by its feeble supernaturalism, and by the entire absence of critical ability among its writers to distinguish between fact and fable, have hitherto failed to speak a reasonable word. Of the attempt in our own day to revive an interest in them we shall say little in this place. They have no form or beauty to give them attraction in themselves; and for their human interest, the broad atmosphere of the world suited ill with these delicate plants which had grown up under the shadow of the convent wall; they were exotics, not from another climate, but from another age; the breath of scorn fell on them, and having no root in the hearts and beliefs of men any more, but only in the sentimentalities and make-beliefs, they withered and sank. And yet, in their place as historical phenomena they are as

remarkable as any of the pagan mythologies; to the full as remarkable, perhaps far more so, if the length and firmness of hold they once exercised on the conviction of mankind is to pass for anything in the estimate—and to ourselves they have a near and peculiar interest, as spiritual facts in the growth of the catholic faith.

Philosophy has rescued the old theogonies from ridicule; their extravagancies, even the most grotesque of them, can be now seen to have their root in an idea, often a deep one, representing features of natural history or of metaphysical speculation—and we do not laugh at them any more. In their origin, they were the consecration of the first-fruits of knowledge; the expression of a real reverential belief. Then time did its work on them; knowledge grew and they could not grow; they became monstrous and mischievous, and were driven out by Christianity with scorn and indignation. But it is with human institutions, as it is with men themselves; we are tender with the dead when their power to hurt us has passed away; and as Paganism can never more be dangerous, we have been able to command a calmer attitude towards it, and to detect under its most repulsive features sufficient latent elements of genuine thought to satisfy us that even in their darkest aberrations men are never wholly given over to falsehood and absurdity. When philosophy has done for mediæval mythology what it has done for Hesiod and for the Edda, we shall find in it at least as deep a sense of the awfulness and mystery of life, and we shall find also a moral element there which at their best they never had. The lives of the saints are always simple, often childish, seldom beautiful; yet, as Goethe observed, if without beauty they are always good.

And as a phenomenon, let us not deceive ourselves on its magnitude. The Bollandists were restricted on many sides. They took only what was in Latin—while every country in Europe had its own home-growth in its own language—and thus many of the most characteristic

of the lives are not to be found at all in their collection. And again, they took but one life of each saint, composed in all cases late, and compiled out of the mass of various shorter lives which had grown up in different localities out of popular tradition; so that many of their longer productions have an elaborate literary character, with an appearance of artifice which, till we know how they came into existence, might blind us to the vast width and variety of the traditionary sources from which they are drawn. In the twelfth century there were sixty-six lives extant of St. Patrick alone; and that in a country where every parish had its own special saint and special legend of him. These sixty-six lives may have contained (Mr. Gibbon says *must* have contained) at least as many thousand lies. Perhaps so. To severe criticism, even the existence of a single apostle, St. Patrick, appears problematical. But at least there is the historical fact, about which admits of no mistake, that they did grow up in some way or other, that they were repeated, sung, listened to, written, and read; that these lives in Ireland, and all over Europe and over the earth, wherever the catholic faith was preached, stories like these sprang out of the heart of the people, and grew and shadowed over the entire believing mind of the catholic world. Wherever church was founded, or soil was consecrated for the long resting-place of those who had died in the faith; wherever the sweet bells of convent or of monastery were heard in the evening air, charming the unquiet world to rest and remembrance of God, there rested the memory of some apostle who had laid the first stone, there was the sepulchre of some martyr whose relics reposed beneath the altar, of some confessor who had suffered there for his Master's sake, of some holy ascetic who in silent self-chosen austerity had woven a ladder there of prayer and penance, on which the angels were believed to have ascended and descended. It is not a phenomenon of an age or of a century; it is characteristic of the history of Christianity. From the time when the first preachers of the faith passed out from their homes by that quiet

Galilean lake, to go to and fro over the earth, and did their mighty work, and at last disappeared and were not any more seen, these sacred legends began to grow. Those who had once known them, who had drawn from their lips the blessed message of light and life, one and all would gather together what fragments they could find of their stories. Rumours blew in from all the winds. They had been seen here, had been seen there, in the farthest corners of the earth, preaching, contending, suffering, prevailing. Affection did not stay to scrutinize. As when some member of a family among ourselves is absent in some far place from which sure news of him comes slowly and uncertainly; if he has been in the army, on some dangerous expedition, or at sea, or anywhere where real or imaginary dangers stimulate anxiety; or when one is gone away from us altogether—fallen perhaps in battle—and when the story of his end can be collected but fitfully from strangers who only knew his name, but had heard him nobly spoken of; the faintest threads are caught at; reports, the vagueness of which might be evident to indifference, are to love strong grounds of confidence, and "trifles light as air" establish themselves as certainties;—so, in those first Christian communities, travellers came through from east and west; legions on the march, or caravans of wandering merchants; and one had been in Rome and seen Peter disputing with Simon Magus; another in India, where he had heard St. Thomas preaching to the Brahmins; a third brought with him from the wilds of Britain, a staff which he had cut, as he said, from a thorn tree, the seed of which St. Joseph had sown there, and which had grown to its full size in a single night, making merchandize of the precious relic out of the credulity of the believers. So the legends grew, and were treasured up, and loved, and trusted; and alas! all which we have been able to do with them is to call them lies, and to point a shallow moral on the impostures and credulities of the early catholic. An atheist could not wish us to say more; if we can really believe that the Christian church was

made over in its very cradle to lies and to the father of lies, and was allowed to remain in his keeping, so to say, till yesterday, he will not much trouble himself with any faith which after such an admission we may profess to entertain. For as this spirit began in the first age in which the church began to have a history; so it continued so long as the church as an integral body retained its vitality; and only died out in the degeneracy which preceded, and which brought on the Reformation. For fourteen hundred years these stories held their place, and rang on from age to age, from century to century; as the new faith widened its boundaries and numbered ever more and more great names of men and women who had fought and died for it, so long their histories living in the hearts of those for whom they laboured, laid hold of them and filled them, and the devout imagination, possessed with what was often no more than the rumour of a name, bodied it out into life, and form, and reality. And doubtless, if we try them by any historical canon, we have to say that quite endless untruths grew in this way to be believed among men; and not believed only, but held sacred, passionately and devotedly; not filling the history books only, not only serving to amuse and edify the refectory, or to furnish matter for meditation in the cell, but claiming days for themselves of special remembrance, entering into liturgies and inspiring prayers, forming the spiritual nucleus of the hopes and fears of millions of human souls.

From the hard barren standing ground of the fact idolater, what a strange sight must be that still mountain peak on the wild west Irish shore, where for more than ten centuries, a rude old bell and a carved chip of oak have witnessed, or seemed to witness, to the presence long ago there of the Irish apostle; and in the sharp crystals of the trap rock a path has been worn smooth by the bare feet and bleeding knees of the pilgrims, who still, in the August weather, drag their painful way along it as they have done for a thousand years. Doubtless the "Lives of the Saints" are full of

lies. Are then none in the Iliad? in the legends of Æneas? Were the stories sung in the liturgy of Eleusis all so true? so true as fact? Are the songs of the Cid or of Siegfried? We say nothing of the lies in these, but why? Oh, it will be said, but they are fictions, they were never supposed to be true. But they *were* supposed to be true, to the full as true as the *Legenda Aurea*. Oh then, they are poetry; and besides, they have nothing to do with Christianity. Yes, that is it; they have nothing to do with Christianity. It has grown such a solemn business with us, and we bring such long faces to it, that we cannot admit or conceive to be at all naturally admissible such a light companion as the imagination. The distinction between secular and religious has been extended even to the faculties; and we cannot tolerate in others the fulness and freedom which we have lost or rejected for ourselves. Yet it has been a fatal mistake with the critics. They found themselves off the recognized ground of Romance and Paganism, and they failed to see the same principles at work, though at work with new materials. In the records of all human affairs, it cannot be too often insisted on that two kinds of truth run for ever side by side, or rather, crossing in and out with each other, form the warp and the woof of the coloured web which we call history. The one, the literal and external truths corresponding to the eternal and as yet undiscovered laws of fact: the other, the truth of feeling and of thought, which embody themselves either in distorted pictures of the external, or in some entirely new creation; sometimes moulding and shaping real history, sometimes taking the form of heroic biography, of tradition, or popular legend; sometimes appearing as recognized fiction in the epic, the drama, or the novel. It is useless to tell us that this is to confuse truth and falsehood. We are stating a fact, not a theory, and if it makes truth and falsehood difficult to distinguish, that is nature's fault, not ours. Fiction is only false, when it is false, not to fact, else how could it be fiction? but when it is—to *law*. To try it by its correspondence to

the real is wretched pedantry; we create as nature creates, by the force which is in us, which refuses to be restrained; we cannot help it, and we are only false when we make monsters, or when we pretend that our inventions are fact, when we substitute truths of one kind for truths of another; when we substitute,—and again we must say when we *intentionally* substitute;—whenever persons, and whenever facts seize strongly hold of the imagination, (and of course when there is anything remarkable in them they must and will do so,) invention glides into the images as they form in us; it must, as it ever has, from the first legends of a cosmogony, to the written life of the great man who died last year or century, or to the latest scientific magazine. We cannot relate facts as they are, they must first pass through ourselves, and we are more or less than mortal if they gather nothing in the transit. The great outlines alone lie around us as imperative and constraining; the detail we each fill up variously according to the turn of our sympathies, the extent of our knowledge, or our general theories of things, and therefore it may be said that the only literally true history possible, is the history which mind has left of itself in all the changes through which it has passed.

Suetonius is to the full as extravagant and superstitious as Surius, and Suetonius was most laborious and careful, and was the friend of Tacitus and Pliny; Suetonius gives us prodigies, when Surius has miracles, but that is all the difference; each follows the form of the supernatural which belonged to the genius of his age. Plutarch writes a life of Lycurgus with details of his childhood, and of the trials and vicissitudes of his age; and the existence of Lycurgus is now quite as questionable as that of St. Patrick or of St. George of England.

No rectitude of intention will save us from mistakes. Sympathies and antipathies are but synonyms of prejudice, and indifference is impossible. Love is blind, and so is every other passion; love believes eagerly what it desires; it excuses or passes lightly over blemishes, it

dwells on what is beautiful, while dislike sees a tarnish on what is brightest, and deepens faults into vices. Do we believe that all this is a disease of unenlightened times, and that in our strong sunlight only truth can get received; then let us contrast the portrait for instance of Sir Robert Peel as it is drawn in the Free Trade Hall, at Manchester, at the county meeting, and in the Oxford Common Room. It is not so. Faithful and literal history is possible only to an impassive spirit; it is impossible to man, until perfect knowledge and perfect faith in God shall enable him to see and endure every fact in its reality; until perfect love shall kindle in him under its touch the one just emotion which is in harmony with the eternal order of all things.

How far we are in these days from approximating to such a combination we need not here insist. Criticism in the hands of men like Niebuhr seems to have accomplished great intellectual triumphs: and in Germany and France and among ourselves we have our new schools of the philosophy of history; yet their real successes have hitherto only been destructive; when philosophy reconstructs, it does nothing but project its own idea; when it throws off tradition, it cannot work without a theory, and what is a theory but an imperfect generalization caught up by a predisposition? what is Comte's great division of the eras, but a theory, and facts but as clay in his hands which he can mould to illustrate it, as every clever man will find facts to be, let his theory be what it will. Intellect can destroy but it cannot make alive again,—call in the creative faculties, call in Love, Idea, Imagination, and we have living figures, but we cannot tell whether they are figures which ever lived before. Alas, the high faith in which Love and Intellect can alone unite in their fulness, has not yet found utterance in modern historians.

The greatest man who has as yet given himself to the recording of human affairs is, beyond question, Cornelius Tacitus. Alone in Tacitus a serene calmness of insight was compatible with intensity of feeling; he took no side; he may have been Imperialist, he may

have been Republican, but he has left no sign whether he was either: he appears to have sifted facts with scrupulous integrity; to administer his love, his scorn, his hatred, according only to individual merit, and these are rather felt by the reader in the life-like clearness of his portraits than expressed in words by himself. Yet such a power of seeing into things was only possible to him, because there was no party left with which he could determinedly side, and no wide spirit alive in Rome through which he could feel; the spirit of Rome, the spirit of life had gone away to seek other forms, and the world of Tacitus was a heap of decaying institutions; a stage where men and women, as they themselves were individually base or noble, played over their little parts. Life indeed was come into the world, was working in it, and silently shaping the old dead corpse into fresh and beautiful being; Tacitus alludes to it once only in one brief scornful chapter; and the most poorly gifted of those forlorn biographers whose unreasoning credulity was piling up the legends of St. Mary and the Apostles which now drive the ecclesiastical historian to despair, knew more, in his divine hope and faith, of the real spirit which had gone out among mankind, than the keenest and gravest intellect which ever set itself to contemplate them.

And now having in some degree cleared the ground of difficulties, let us go back to the Lives of the Saints. If Bede tells us lies about St. Cuthbert, we will disbelieve his stories, but we will not call Bede a liar, even though he prefaces his life with a declaration that he has set down nothing but what he has ascertained on the clearest evidence. We are driven to no such alternative; our canons of criticism are different from Bede's, and so are our notions of probability. Bede would expect *à priori*, and would therefore consider as sufficiently attested by a consent of popular tradition, what the oaths of living witnesses would fail to make credible to a modern English jury. We will call Bede a liar only if he put forward his picture of St. Cuthbert, as a picture of a life which he considered admirable and

excellent, as one after which he was endeavouring to model his own, and which he held up as a pattern of imitation, when in his heart he did not consider it admirable at all, when he was making no effort at the austerities which he was lauding. The histories of the Saints are written as ideals of a Christian life; they have no elaborate and beautiful forms; single and straightforward as they are,—if they are not this they are nothing. For fourteen centuries the religious mind of the catholic world threw them out as its form of hero worship, as the heroic patterns of a form of human life which each Christian within his own limits was endeavouring to realize. The first martyrs and confessors were to those poor monks what the first Dorian conquerors were in the war songs of Tyrtæus, what Achilles and Ajax and Agamemnon and Diomed were wherever Homer was sung or read; or in more modern times what Turpin was in the court of Charlemagne or the Knights of the Round Table in the halls of the Norman castles. This is what they were; and the result is that immense and elaborate hagiology. As with the battle heroes too, the inspiration lies in the universal idea; the varieties of character (with here and there an exception) are slight and unimportant; as examples they were for universal human imitation. Lancelot or Tristram were equally true to the spirit of chivalry; and Patrick on the mountain or Antony in the desert are equal models of patient austerity. The knights fight with giants, enchanters, robbers, unknightly nobles, or furious wild beasts; the Christians fight with the world, the flesh, and the devil. The knight leaves the comforts of home in quest of adventures, the saint in quest of penance, and on the bare rocks or in desolate wildernesses subdues the devil in his flesh with prayers and sufferings, and so alien is it all to the whole thought and system of the modern Christian, that he either rejects such stories altogether as monks' impostures, or receives them with disdainful wonder, as one more shameful form of superstition with which human nature has insulted heaven and disgraced itself.

Leaving, however, for the present, the meaning of monastic asceticism, it seems necessary to insist that there really was such a thing; there is no doubt about it. If the particular actions told of each saint are not literally true, as belonging to him, abundance of men did for many centuries lead the sort of life which they are said to have led. We have got a notion that the friars were a snug, comfortable set, after all; and the life in a monastery pretty much like that in a modern university, where the old monks' language and affectation of unworldliness does somehow contrive to co-exist with as large a mass of bodily enjoyment as man's nature can well appropriate; and very likely this was the state into which many of the monasteries had fallen in the fifteenth century. It had begun to be, and it was a symptom of a very rapid disorder in them, promptly terminating in dissolution; but long, long ages lay behind the fifteenth century, in which wisely or foolishly these old monks and hermits did make themselves a very hard life of it; and the legend only exceeded the reality, in being a very slightly idealized portrait of it. We are not speaking of the miracles; that is a wholly different question. When men knew little of the order of nature, whatever came to pass without an obvious cause was at once set down to influences beyond nature and above it; and so long as there were witches and enchanters, strong with the help of the bad powers, of course the especial servants of God would not be left without graces to outmatch and overcome the devil. And there were many other reasons why the saints should work miracles. They had done so under the old dispensation, and there was no obvious reason why Christians should be worse off than Jews. And again, although it be true, in the modern phrase, which is beginning to savour a little of cant, that the highest natural is the highest supernatural, it is not everybody that is able to see that; natural facts permit us to be so easily familiar with them, that they have an air of commonness; and when we have a vast idea to express, there is always a disposition to the extraordinary. But

the miracles are not the chief thing; nor ever were they so. Men did not become saints by working miracles, but they worked miracles because they had become saints; and the instructiveness and value of their lives lay in the means which they had used to make themselves what they were: and as we said, in this part of the business there is unquestionable basis of truth—scarcely even exaggeration. We have documentary evidence, which has been passed through the sharp ordeal of party hatred, of the way some men (and those, men of vast mind and vast influence in their day, not mere ignorant fanatics,) conducted themselves, where *myth* has no room to enter. We know something of the hair-shirt of Thomas à Becket, and other uneasy penances of his; and there was another poor monk, whose asceticism imagination could not easily outrun: that was he who, when the earth's mighty ones were banded together to crush him under their armed heels, spoke but one little word; and it fell among them like the spear of Cadmus; the strong ones turned their hands against each other, and the armies melted away; and the proudest monarch of the earth lay at that monk's threshold three winter nights in the scanty clothing of penance, suing miserably for forgiveness. Or again, to take a fairer figure: there is a poem extant, the genuineness of which we believe has not been challenged, composed by Columbkill, commonly called St. Columba. He was a hermit in Aran, a rocky island in the Atlantic, outside Galway Bay; from which he was summoned, we do not know how, but in a manner which appeared to him to be a divine call, to go away and be bishop of Iona. The poem is a "Farewell to Aran," which he wrote on leaving it; and he lets us see something of a hermit's life there. "Farewell," he begins (we are obliged to quote from memory), "a long farewell to thee, Aran of my heart. Paradise is with thee, the garden of God within the sound of thy bells. The angels love Aran. Each day an angel comes there to join in its services." And then he goes on to describe his "dear cell," and the holy happy hours

which he had spent there, "with the wind whistling through the loose stones, and the sea spray hanging on his hair." Aran is no better than a wild rock. It is strewed over with the ruins which may still be seen of the old hermitages; and at their best they could have been but such places as sheep would huddle under in a storm, and shiver in the cold and wet which would pierce through to them.

Or, if written evidence be too untrustworthy, there are silent witnesses which cannot lie, that tell the same touching story. Whoever loiters among the ruins of a monastery will see, commonly leading out of the cloisters, rows of cellars half under-ground, low, damp, and wretched-looking; an earthen floor, bearing no trace of pavement; a roof from which the mortar and the damp keep up (and always must have kept up) a perpetual ooze: for a window a narrow slip in the wall, through which the cold and the wind find as free an access as the light. Such as they are, a well-kept dog would object to accept a night's lodging in them; and if they had been prison cells, thousands of philanthropic tongues would have trumpeted out their horrors. The stranger perhaps supposes that they were the very dungeons of which he has heard such terrible things. He asks his guide, and his guide tells him they were the monks' dormitories. Yes; there on that wet soil, with that dripping roof above them, was the self-chosen home of those poor men. Through winter frost, through rain and storm, through summer sunshine, generation after generation of them, there they lived and prayed, and at last lay down and died.

It is all gone now—gone as if it had never been; and it was as foolish as, if the attempt had succeeded, it would have been mischievous, to revive a devotional interest in the Lives of the Saints. It would have produced but one more unreality in an age already too full of such. No one supposes we should have set to work to live as they lived; that any man, however earnest in his religion, would have gone looking for earth floors and wet dungeons, or wild islands to live in, when he

could get anything better. Either we are wiser, or more humane, or more self-indulgent; at any rate we are something which divides us from mediæval Christianity by an impassable gulf which this age or this epoch will not see bridged over. Nevertheless, these modern hagiologists, however wrongly they went to work at it, had detected, and were endeavouring to fill, a very serious blank in our educational system; a very serious blank indeed, and one which, somehow, we must contrive to get filled if the education of character is ever to be more than a name with us. To try and teach people how to live without giving them examples in which our rules are illustrated, is like teaching them to draw by the rules of perspective, and of light and shade, without designs to study them in; or to write verse by the laws of rhyme and metre without song or poem in which rhyme and metre are seen in their effects. It is a principle which we have forgotten, and it is one which the old Catholics did not forget. We do not mean that they set out with saying to themselves "we must have examples, we must have ideals;" very likely they never thought about it at all; love for their holy men, and a thirst to know about them, produced the histories; and love unconsciously working gave them the best for which they could have wished. The boy at school at the monastery, the young monk disciplining himself as yet with difficulty under the austerities to which he had devoted himself, the old halting on toward the close of his pilgrimage, all of them had before their eyes, in the legend of the patron saint, a personal realization of all they were trying after; leading them on, beckoning to them, and pointing, as they stumbled among their difficulties, to the marks which his own footsteps had left, as he had trod that hard path before them. It was as if the church was for ever saying to them:—"You have doubts and fears, and trials and temptations outward and inward; you have sinned, perhaps, and feel the burden of your sin. Here was one who, like you, *in this very spot*, under the same sky, treading the same soil, among the same hills and woods and rocks

and rivers, was tried like you, tempted like you, sinned like you; but here he prayed, and persevered, and did penance, and washed out his sins; he fought the fight, he vanquished the evil one, he triumphed, and now he reigns a saint with Christ in heaven. The same ground which yields you your food, once supplied him; he breathed and lived, and felt, and died *here;* and now, from his throne in the sky, he is still looking down lovingly on his children, making intercession for you that you may have grace to follow him, that by-and-by he may himself offer you at God's throne as his own." It is impossible to measure the influence which a personal reality of this kind must have exercised on the mind, thus daily and hourly impressed upon it through a life; there is nothing vague any more, no abstract excellences to strain after; all is distinct, personal, palpable. It is no dream. The saint's bones are under the altar; nay, perhaps, his very form and features undissolved. Under some late abbot the coffin may have been opened and the body seen without mark or taint of decay. Such things have been, and the emaciation of a saint will account for it without a miracle. Daily some incident of his story is read aloud, or spoken of, or preached upon. In quaint beautiful forms it lives in light in the long chapel windows; and in the summer matins his figure, lighted up in splendour, gleams down on them as they pray, or streams in mysterious shadowy tints along the pavement, clad, as it seems, in soft celestial glory, and shining as he shines in heaven. Alas, alas, where is it all gone?

We are going to venture a few thoughts on the wide question, what possibly may have been the meaning of so large a portion of the human race and so many centuries of Christianity having been surrendered and seemingly sacrificed to the working out this dreary asceticism. If right once, then it is right now; if now worthless, then it could never have been more than worthless; and the energies which spent themselves on it were like corn sown upon the rock, or substance given for that which is not bread. We supposed ourselves

challenged recently for our facts. Here is an enormous fact which there is no evading. It is not to be slurred over with indolent generalities, with unmeaning talk of superstition, of the twilight of the understanding, of barbarism, and of nursery credulity; it is matter for the philosophy of history, if the philosophy has yet been born which can deal with it; one of the solid, experienced facts in the story of mankind which must be accepted and considered with that respectful deference which all facts claim of their several sciences, and which will certainly not disclose its meaning (supposing it to have a meaning) except to reverence, to sympathy, to love. We must remember that the men who wrote these stories, and who practised these austerities, were the same men who composed our liturgies, who built our churches and our cathedrals—and the gothic cathedral is, perhaps, on the whole, the most magnificent creation which the mind of man has as yet thrown out of itself. If there be any such thing as a philosophy of history, real or possible, it is in virtue of there being certain progressive organizing laws in which the fretful lives of each of us are gathered into and subordinated in some larger unity. Thus age is linked on to age, as we are moving forward, with an horizon for ever expanding and advancing. And if this is true, the magnitude of any human phenomenon is a criterion of its importance, and definite forms of thought working through long historic periods imply an effect of one of these vast laws —imply a distinct step in human progress; something previously unrealized is being lived out, and rooted into the heart of mankind. Nature never half does her work. She goes over it, and over it, to make assurance sure, and makes good her ground with wearying repetition. A single section of a short paper is but a small space to enter on so vast an enterprise, nevertheless, a few very general words shall be ventured as a suggestion of what this monastic or saintly spirit may possibly have meant.

First, as the spirit of Christianity is antagonistic to the world whatever form the spirit of the world assumes,

the ideals of christianity will of course be their opposite; as one verges into one extreme the other will verge into the contrary. In those rough times the law was the sword; animal might of arm, and the strong animal heart which guided it, were the excellences which the world rewarded, and monasticism, therefore, in its position of protest, would be the destruction and abnegation of the animal. The war hero in the battle or the tourney yard might be taken as the apotheosis of the fleshly man, the saint in the desert of the spiritual. But this is slight, imperfect, and if true at all only partially so. The animal and the spiritual are not contradictories; they are the complements in the perfect character; and in the middle ages, as in all ages of genuine earnestness, interfused and penetrated each other. There were warrior saints and saintly warriors; and those grand old figures which sleep cross-legged in the cathedral aisles were something higher than only one more form of the beast of prey. Monasticism represented something more positive than a protest against the world. We believe it to have been the realization of the infinite loveliness and beauty of personal purity.

In the earlier civilization, the Greeks, however genuine their reverence for the gods, do not seem to have supposed any part of their duty to the gods to consist in keeping their bodies untainted. Exquisite as was their sense of beauty, of beauty of mind as well as beauty of form, with all their loftiness and their nobleness, with their ready love of moral excellence in some of its manifestations, as fortitude, or devotion to liberty and to home, they had little or no idea of what we mean by morality. With a few rare exceptions, pollution, too detestable to be even named among ourselves, was of familiar and daily occurrence among their greatest men; was no reproach to philosopher or to statesman; and was not supposed to be incompatible, and was not, in fact, incompatible with any of those especial excellences which we so admire in the Greeks.

Among the Romans (that is, the early Romans of the republic), there was a sufficiently austere morality.

A public officer of state, whose business was to inquire into the private lives of the citizens, and to punish offences against morals, is a phenomenon which we have seen only once on this planet. There was never a people before, and there has been none since, with sufficient virtue to endure it. But the Roman morality is not lovely for its own sake, nor excellent in itself. It is obedience to law, practised and valued, loved for what resulted from it, for the strength and rigid endurance which it gave, but not loved for itself. The Roman nature was fierce, rugged, almost brutal; and it submitted to restraint as stern as itself, as long as the energy of the old spirit endured. But as soon as the energy grew slack, when the religion was no longer believed, and taste, as it was called, came in, and there was no more danger to face, and the world was at their feet, all was swept away as before a whirlwind; there was no loveliness in virtue to make it desired, and the Rome of the Censors presents, in its later age, a picture of enormous sensuality, of the coarsest animal desire, with means unlimited to gratify it. In Latin literature, as little as in the Greek, is there any sense of the beauty of purity. Moral essays on temperance we may find, and praise enough of the wise man whose passions and whose appetites are trained into obedience to reason. But this is no more than the philosophy of the old Roman life, which got itself expressed in words when men were tired of the reality; it involves no sense of sin. If sin could be indulged without weakening our self-command, or without hurting other people, Roman philosophy would have nothing to say against it.

The Christians stepped far out beyond philosophy; without speculating on the *why*, they felt that indulgence of animal passion did, in fact, pollute them, and so much the more, the more it was deliberate. Philosophy, gliding into Manicheism, divided the forces of the universe, giving the spirit to God, but declaring matter to be eternally and incurably evil; and looking forward to the time when the spirit should be emanci-

pated from the body, as the beginning of, or as the return to, its proper existence, took no especial care what became the meanwhile of its evil tenement of flesh. If it sinned, sin was its element; it could not do other than sin; purity of conduct could not make the body clean, and no amount of bodily indulgence could shed a taint upon the spirit—a very comfortable doctrine, and one which, under various disguises, has appeared a good many times on the earth. But Christianity, shaking it all off, would present the body to God as a pure and holy sacrifice, as so much of the material world conquered from the appetites and lusts, and from the devil whose abode they were. This was the meaning of the fastings and scourgings, the penances and night-watchings; it was this which sent St. Anthony to the tombs and set Simeon on his pillar, to conquer the devil in the flesh, and keep themselves, if possible, undefiled by so much as one corrupt thought.

And they may have been absurd and extravagant; when the feeling is stronger than the judgment, men are very apt to be so. If, in the recoil from Manicheism, they conceived that a body of a saint thus purified had contracted supernatural virtue and could work miracles, they had not sufficiently attended to the facts, and so far are not unexceptionable witnesses to them. Nevertheless they did their work, and in virtue of it we are raised to a higher stage, we are lifted forward a mighty step which we can never again retrace. Personal purity is not the whole for which we have to care, it is but one feature in the ideal character of man. The monks may have thought it was all, or more nearly all than it is; and therefore their lives may seem to us poor, mean, and emasculate. Yet it is with life as it is with science; generations of men have given themselves exclusively to single branches, which, when mastered, form but a little section in a cosmic philosophy; and in life, so slow is progress, it may take a thousand years to make good a single step. Weary and tedious enough it seems when we cease to speak in large language, and

remember the numbers of individual souls who have been at work at it; but who knows whereabouts we are in the duration of the race? Are we crawling out of the cradle, or are we tottering into the grave? In nursery, in schoolroom, or in opening manhood? Who knows? It is enough for us to be sure of our steps when we have taken them, and thankfully to accept what has been done for us. Henceforth it is impossible for us to give our unmixed admiration to any character which moral shadows overhang. Henceforth we require not greatness only, but goodness; and not that goodness only which begins and ends in conduct correctly regulated, but that love of goodness, that keen pure feeling for it, which resides in a conscience as sensitive and susceptible as woman's modesty.

So much for what seems to us the philosophy of this matter. If we are right, it is no more than a first furrow in the crust of a soil, which hitherto the historians have been contented to leave in its barrenness. If they are conscientious enough not to trifle with the facts, as they look back on them from the easiness of modern Christianity which has ceased to demand any heavy effort of self-sacrifice, they either revile the superstition or pity the ignorance which made such large mistakes on the nature of religion—and, loud in their denunciations of priestcraft and of lying wonders, they point their moral with pictures of the ambition of mediæval prelacy or the scandals of the annals of the papacy. For the inner life of all those millions of immortal souls who were struggling, with such good or bad success as was given them, to carry Christ's cross along their journey in this earth of ours, they set it by, pass it over, dismiss it out of history, with some poor common-place simper of sorrow or of scorn. It will not do. Mankind have not been so long on this planet altogether, that we can allow so large a chasm to be scooped out of their spiritual existence.

We intended to leave our readers with something lighter than all this in the shape of literary criticism and a few specimen extracts; both of which must now,

however, be necessarily brief—we are running out our space. Whoever is curious to study the lives of the saints in their originals, should rather go anywhere than to the Bollandists, and universally never read a late life when he can command an early one, for the genius in them is in the ratio of their antiquity, and, like river-water, is most pure nearest to the fountain head. We are lucky in possessing several specimens of the mode of their growth in late and early lives of the same saints, and the process in all is similar. Out of the lives of St. Bride three are left; out of the sixty-six of St. Patrick, there are eight; the first of each belonging to the sixth century, the latest to the thirteenth. The first are in verse; they belong to a time when there was no one to write such things, and were popular in form and popular in their origin—the flow is easy, the style graceful and natural; but the step from poetry to prose is substantial as well as formal; the imagination is ossified, and the exuberance of legendary creativeness we exchange for the hard dogmatic record of fact without reality, and fiction without grace. The marvellous in the poetical lives is comparatively slight; the after miracles being composed frequently out of a mistake of poets' metaphors for literal truth. There is often real, genial, human beauty in the old verse. The first two stanzas, for instance, of St. Bride's Hymn are of high merit, as may, perhaps, be imperfectly seen in a translation:—

> "Bride the queen, she loved not the world;
> She floated on the waves of the world
> As the sea-bird floats upon the billow.
>
> Such sleep she slept as the mother sleeps
> In the far land of her captivity,
> Mourning for her child at home."

What a picture is there of the strangeness and yearning of the poor human soul in this earthly pilgrimage. The poetical "Life of St. Patrick," too, is full of fine, wild, natural imagery. The boy is described as a

shepherd on the hills of Down, and there is a legend, well told, of the angel Victor coming to him, and leaving a gigantic foot-print on a rock from which he sprang into heaven. The legend, of course, rose from some remarkable natural feature of the spot; but, as it is told here, a shadowy unreality hangs over it, and it is doubtful whether it is more than a vision of the boy. But in the prose all is crystalline; the story is drawn out, with a barren prolixity of detail, into a series of angelic visitations. And again, when Patrick is described, as the after apostle, raising the dead Celts to life, the metaphor cannot be left in its natural force, and we have a long weary list of literal deaths and literal raisings. And so in many ways the freshness and individuality is lost with time. The larger saints swallowed up the smaller and appropriated their exploits; chasms were supplied by an ever ready imagination; and, like the stock of good works laid up for general use, there was a stock of miracles ever ready when any defect was to be supplied. So it was that, after the first impulse, the progressive life of a saint rolled on like a snow-ball down a mountain-side, gathering up into itself whatever lay in its path, fact or legend, appropriate or inappropriate, sometimes real jewels of genuine old tradition, sometimes the débris of the old creeds and legends of heathenism; and on, and on, till at length it reached the bottom, and was dashed in pieces on the Reformation.

One more illustration—one which shall serve as evidence of what the really greatest, most vigorous, minds in the twelfth century could accept as possible or probable, and which they could relate (on what evidence we do not know) as really ascertained facts. We remember something of St. Anselm: both as a statesman and as a theologian, he was unquestionably the ablest man of his time alive in Europe. Here is a story which he tells of a certain Cornish St. Kieran. The saint, with thirty of his companions, was preaching within the frontiers of a lawless pagan prince; and, disregarding all orders to be quiet or to leave the country, continued

to agitate, to threaten, and to thunder even in the ears of the prince himself. Things took their natural course. Disobedience provoked punishment. A guard of soldiers was sent, and the saint and his little band were decapitated. The scene of the execution was a wood, and the heads and trunks were left lying there for the wolves and the wild birds.

"But now a miracle, such as was once heard of before in the church in the person of the holy Denis, was again wrought by divine providence to preserve the bodies of his saints from profanation. The trunk of Kieran rose from the ground, and selecting first his own head, and carrying it to a stream, and there carefully washing it, and afterwards performing the same sacred office for each of his companions, giving each body its own head, he dug graves for them and buried them, and last of all buried himself."

It is even so. So it stands written in a life claiming Anselm's authorship; and there is no reason why the authorship should not be his. Out of the heart come the issues of evil and of good, and not out of the intellect or the understanding. Men are not good or bad, noble or base—thank God for it!—as they judge well or ill of the probabilities of nature, but as they love God and hate the devil. And yet it is instructive. We have heard grave good men—men of intellect and influence—with all the advantages of modern science, learning, experience; men who would regard Anselm with sad and serious pity; yet tell us stories, as having fallen within their own experience, of the marvels of mesmerism, to the full as ridiculous (if anything is ridiculous) as this of the poor decapitated Kieran.

"Mutato nomine de te
Fabula narratur."

We see our natural faces in the glass of history, and turn away and straightway forget what manner of men we are. The superstition of science scoffs at the superstition of faith.

# THE DISSOLUTION OF THE MONASTERIES

To be entirely just in our estimate of other ages is not difficult—it is impossible. Even what is passing in our presence we see but through a glass darkly. The mind as well as the eye adds something of its own, before an image, even of the clearest object, can be painted upon it.

And in historical inquiries, the most instructed thinkers have but a limited advantage over the most illiterate. Those who know the most, approach least to agreement. The most careful investigations are diverging roads—the further men travel upon them, the greater the interval by which they are divided. In the eyes of David Hume, the history of the Saxon Princes is "the scuffling of kites and crows." Father Newman would mortify the conceit of a degenerate England by pointing to the sixty saints and the hundred confessors who were trained in her royal palaces for the Calendar of the Blessed. How vast a chasm yawns between these two conceptions of the same era! Through what common term can the student pass from one into the other?

Or, to take an instance yet more noticeable. The history of England scarcely interests Mr. Macaulay before the Revolution of the seventeenth century. To Lord John Russell, the Reformation was the first outcome from centuries of folly and ferocity; and Mr. Hallam's more temperate language softens, without concealing, a similar conclusion. These writers have all studied what they describe. Mr. Carlyle has studied the

same subject with power at least equal to theirs, and to him the greatness of English character was waning with the dawn of English literature; the race of heroes was already failing. The era of action was yielding before the era of speech.

All these views may seem to ourselves exaggerated; we may have settled into some moderate *via media*, or have carved out our own ground on an original pattern; but if we are wise, the differences in other men's judgments will teach us to be diffident. The more distinctly we have made history bear witness in favour of our particular opinions, the more we have multiplied the chances against the truth of our own theory.

Again, supposing that we have made a truce with "opinions," properly so called; supposing we have satisfied ourselves that it is idle to quarrel upon points on which good men differ, and that it is better to attend rather to what we certainly know; supposing that, either from superior wisdom, or from the conceit of superior wisdom, we have resolved that we will look for human perfection neither exclusively in the Old World nor exclusively in the New—neither among Catholics nor Protestants, among Whigs or Tories, heathens or Christians—that we have laid aside accidental differences, and determined to recognize only moral distinctions, to love moral worth, and to hate moral evil, wherever we find them;—even supposing all this, we have not much improved our position—we cannot leap from our shadow.

Eras, like individuals, differ from one another in the species of virtue which they encourage. In one age, we find the virtues of the warrior, in the next of the saint. The ascetic and the soldier in their turn disappear; an industrial era succeeds, bringing with it the virtues of common sense, of grace, and refinement. There is the virtue of energy and command, there is the virtue of humility and patient suffering. All these are different, and all are, or may be, of equal moral value; yet, from the constitution of our minds, we are

so framed that we cannot equally appreciate all; we sympathize instinctively with the person who most represents our own ideal—with the period when the graces which most harmonize with our own tempers have been especially cultivated. Further, if we leave out of sight these refinements, and content ourselves with the most popular conceptions of morality, there is this immeasurable difficulty—so great, yet so little considered,—that goodness is positive as well as negative, and consists in the active accomplishment of certain things which we are bound to do, as well as in the abstaining from things which we are bound not to do. And here the warp and woof vary in shade and pattern. Many a man, with the help of circumstances may pick his way clear through life, never having violated one prohibitive commandment, and yet at last be fit only for the place of the unprofitable servant—he may not have committed either sin or crime, yet never have felt the pulsation of a single unselfish emotion. Another, meanwhile, shall have been hurried by an impulsive nature into fault after fault, shall have been reckless, improvident, perhaps profligate, yet be fitter after all for the kingdom of Heaven than the Pharisee—fitter, because against the catalogue of faults there could perhaps be set a fairer list of acts of comparative generosity and self-forgetfulness—fitter, because to those who love much, much is forgiven. Fielding had no occasion to make Blifil, behind his decent coat, a traitor and a hypocrite. It would have been enough to have coloured him in and out alike in the steady hues of selfishness, afraid of offending the upper powers as he was afraid of offending Allworthy,—not from any love for what was good, but solely because it would be imprudent—because the pleasure to be gained was not worth the risk of consequences. Such a Blifil would have answered the novelist's purpose—he would still have been a worse man in the estimation of some of us than Tom Jones.

So the truth is; but unfortunately it is only where accurate knowledge is stimulated by affection, that we

are able to feel it. Persons who live beyond our own circle, and still more persons who have lived in another age, receive what is called justice, not charity; and justice is supposed to consist in due allotments of censure for each special act of misconduct, leaving merit unrecognized. There are many reasons for this harsh method of judging. We must decide of men by what we know, and it is easier to know faults than to know virtues. Faults are specific, easily described, easily appreciated, easily remembered. And again, there is, or may be, hypocrisy in virtue; but no one pretends to vice who is not vicious. The bad things which can be proved of a man we know to be genuine. He was a spendthrift, he was an adulterer, he gambled, he fought a duel. These are blots positive, unless untrue, and when uncorrected tinge the whole character.

This also is to be observed in historical criticism. All men feel a necessity of being on some terms with their conscience, at their own expense, or at another's. If they cannot part with their faults, they will at least call them by their right name when they meet with such faults elsewhere; and thus, when they find accounts of deeds of violence or sensuality, of tyranny, of injustice of man to man, of great and extensive suffering, or any of those other misfortunes which the selfishness of men has at various times occasioned, they will vituperate the doers of such things, and the age which has permitted them to be done, with the full emphasis of virtuous indignation, while all the time they are themselves doing things which will be described, with no less justice, in the same colour, by an equally virtuous posterity.

Historians are fond of recording the supposed sufferings of the poor in the days of serfdom and villanage; yet the records of the strikes of the last ten years, when told by the sufferers, contain pictures no less fertile in tragedy. We speak of famines and plagues under the Tudors and Stuarts; but the Irish famine, and the Irish plague of 1847, the last page of such horrors which has yet been turned over, is the most horrible

of all. We can conceive a description of England during the year which has just closed over us, true in all its details, containing no one statement which can be challenged, no single exaggeration which can be proved. And this description, if given without the correcting traits, shall make ages to come marvel why the Cities of the Plain were destroyed, and England was allowed to survive. The frauds of trusted men, high in power and high in supposed religion; the wholesale poisonings; the robberies; the adulteration of food —nay, of almost everything exposed for sale—the cruel usage of women—children murdered for the burial fees —life and property insecure in open day in the open streets—splendour such as the world never saw before upon earth, with vice and squalor crouching under its walls—let all this be written down by an enemy, or let it be ascertained hereafter by the investigation of a posterity which desires to judge us as we generally have judged our forefathers, and few years will show darker in the English annals than the year which has so lately closed behind us. Yet we know, in the honesty of our hearts, how unjust such a picture would be. Our future advocate, if we are so happy as to find one, may not be able to disprove a single article in the indictment—and yet we know that, as the world goes, he will be right if he marks the year with a white stroke —as one in which, on the whole, the moral harvest was better than an average.

Once more: our knowledge of any man is always inadequate—even of the unit which each of us calls himself; and the first condition under which we can know a man at all is, that he be in essentials something like ourselves; that our own experience be an interpreter which shall open the secrets of his experience; and it often happens, even among our contemporaries, that we are altogether baffled. The Englishman and the Italian may understand each other's speech, but the language of each other's ideas has still to be learnt. Our long failures in Ireland have risen from a radical incongruity of character which has divided the Celt

from the Saxon. And again, in the same country, the Catholic will be a mystery to the Protestant, and the Protestant to the Catholic. Their intellects have been shaped in opposite moulds; they are like instruments which cannot be played in concert. In the same way, but in a far higher degree, we are divided from the generations which have preceded us in this planet--we try to comprehend a Pericles or a Cæsar—an image rises before us which we seem to recognize as belonging to our common humanity. There is this feature which is familiar to us—and this—and this. We are full of hope; the lineaments, one by one, pass into clearness; when suddenly the figure becomes enveloped in a cloud—some perplexity crosses our analysis, baffling it utterly; the phantom which we have evoked dies away before our eyes, scornfully mocking our incapacity to master it.

The English antecedent to the Reformation are nearer to us than Greeks or Romans; and yet there is a large interval between the baron who fought at Barnet field, and his polished descendant at a modern *levée*. The scale of appreciation and the rule of judgment—the habits, the hopes, the fears, the emotions—have utterly changed.

In perusing modern histories, the present writer has been struck dumb with wonder at the facility with which men will fill in chasms in their information with conjecture; will guess at the motives which have prompted actions; will pass their censures, as if all secrets of the past lay out on an open scroll before them. He is obliged to say for himself that, wherever he has been fortunate enough to discover authentic explanations of English historical difficulties, it is rare indeed that he has found any conjecture, either of his own or of any other modern writer, confirmed. The true motive has almost invariably been of a kind which no modern experience could have suggested.

Thoughts such as these form a hesitating prelude to an expression of opinion on a controverted question. They will serve, however, to indicate the limits within

which the said opinion is supposed to be hazarded. And in fact, neither in this nor in any historical subject is the conclusion so clear that it can be enunciated in a definite form. The utmost which can be safely hazarded with history is to relate honestly ascertained facts, with only such indications of a judicial sentence upon them as may be suggested in the form in which the story is arranged.

Whether the monastic bodies of England, at the time of their dissolution, were really in that condition of moral corruption which is laid to their charge in the Act of Parliament by which they were dissolved, is a point which it seems hopeless to argue. Roman Catholic, and indeed almost all English, writers who are not committed to an unfavourable opinion by the ultra-Protestantism of their doctrines—seem to have agreed of late years that the accusations, if not false, were enormously exaggerated. The dissolution, we are told, was a predetermined act of violence and rapacity; and when the reports and the letters of the visitors are quoted in justification of the Government, the discussion is closed with the dismissal of every unfavourable witness from the court, as venal, corrupt, calumnious—in fact, as a suborned liar. Upon these terms the argument is easily disposed of; and if it were not that truth is in all matters better than falsehood, it would be idle to reopen a question which cannot be justly dealt with. No evidence can affect convictions which have been arrived at without evidence—and why should we attempt a task which it is hopeless to accomplish? It seems necessary, however, to reassert the actual state of the surviving testimony from time to time, if it be only to sustain the links of the old traditions; and the present paper will contain one or two pictures of a peculiar kind, exhibiting the life and habits of those institutions, which have been lately met with chiefly among the unprinted Records. In anticipation of any possible charge of unfairness in judging from isolated instances, we disclaim simply all desire to judge—all wish to do anything beyond relating certain ascertained

stories. Let it remain, to those who are perverse enough to insist upon it, an open question whether the monasteries were more corrupt under Henry VIII. than they had been four hundred years earlier. The dissolution would have been equally a necessity; for no reasonable person would desire that bodies of men should have been maintained for the only business of singing masses, when the efficacy of masses was no longer believed. Our present desire is merely this—to satisfy ourselves whether the Government, in discharging a duty which could not be dispensed with, condescended to falsehood in seeking a vindication for themselves which they did not require; or whether they had cause really to believe the majority of the monastic bodies to be as they affirmed—whether, that is to say, there really were such cases either of flagrant immorality, neglect of discipline, or careless waste and prodigality, as to justify the general censure which was pronounced against the system by the Parliament and the Privy Council.

Secure in the supposed completeness with which Queen Mary's agents destroyed the Records of the visitation under her father, Roman-catholic writers have taken refuge in a disdainful denial; and the Anglicans, who for the most part (while contented to enjoy the fruits of the Reformation) detest the means by which it was brought about, have taken the same view. Bishop Latimer tells us that, when the Report of the visitors of the abbeys was read in the Commons House, there rose from all sides one long cry of "Down with them." But Bishop Latimer, in the opinion of High Churchmen, is not to be believed. Do we produce letters of the visitors themselves, we are told that they are the slanders prepared to justify a preconceived purpose of spoliation. No witness, it seems, will be admitted unless it be the witness of a friend. Unless some enemy of the Reformation can be found to confess the crimes which made the Reformation necessary, the crimes themselves are to be regarded as unproved. This is a hard condition. We appeal to Wolsey.

Wolsey commenced the suppression. Wolsey first made public the infamies which disgraced the Church; while, notwithstanding, he died the devoted servant of the Church. This evidence is surely admissible? But no: Wolsey, too, must be put out of court. Wolsey was a courtier and a timeserver. Wolsey was a tyrant's minion. Wolsey was—in short, we know not what Wolsey was—or what he was not. Who can put confidence in a charlatan? Behind the bulwarks of such objections, the champion of the abbeys may well believe himself secure.

And yet, unreasonable though these demands may be, it happens, after all, that we are able partially to gratify them. It is strange that of all extant accusations against any one of the abbeys, the heaviest is from a quarter which even Lingard himself would scarcely call suspicious. No picture left us by Henry's visitors surpasses, even if it equals, a description of the condition of the Abbey of St. Albans, in the last quarter of the fifteenth century, drawn by Morton, Henry VII.'s Minister, Cardinal Archbishop, Legate of the Apostolic See, in a letter addressed by him to the Abbot of St. Albans himself.

We must request our reader's special attention for the next two pages.

In the year 1489, Pope Innocent VIII.—moved with the enormous stories which reached his ear of the corruption of the houses of religion in England—granted a commission to the Archbishop of Canterbury to make inquiries whether these stories were true, and to proceed to correct and reform as might seem good to him. The regular clergy were exempt from episcopal visitation, except under especial directions from Rome. The occasion had appeared so serious as to make extraordinary interference necessary.

On the receipt of the Papal commission, Cardinal Morton, among other letters, wrote the following:—

"John, by Divine permission, Archbishop of Canterbury, Primate of all England, Legate of the Apostolic

See, to William, Abbot of the Monastery of St. Albans, greeting.

"We have received certain letters under lead, the copies whereof we herewith send you, from our most holy Lord and Father in Christ, Innocent, by Divine Providence Pope, the eighth of that name. We therefore, John, the Archbishop, the visitor, reformer, inquisitor, and judge therein mentioned, in reverence for the Apostolic See, have taken upon ourselves the burden of enforcing the said commission; and have determined that we will proceed by, and according to, the full force, tenour, and effect of the same.

"And it has come to our ears, being at once publicly notorious and brought before us upon the testimony of many witnesses worthy of credit, that you, the abbot afore-mentioned, have been of long time noted and diffamed, and do yet continue so noted, of simony, of usury, of dilapidation and waste of the goods, revenues, and possessions of the said monastery, and of certain other enormous crimes and excesses hereafter written. In the rule, custody, and administration of the goods, spiritual and temporal, of the said monastery, you are so remiss, so negligent, so prodigal, that whereas the said monastery was of old times founded and endowed by the pious devotion of illustrious princes of famous memory, heretofore kings of this land, the most noble progenitors of our most serene Lord and King that now is, in order that true religion might flourish there, that the name of the Most High, in whose honour and glory it was instituted, might be duly celebrated there;

"And whereas, in days heretofore the regular observance of the said rule was greatly regarded, and hospitality was diligently kept;

"Nevertheless, for no little time, during which you have presided in the same monastery, you and certain of your fellow monks and brethren (whose blood, it is feared, through your neglect, a severe Judge will require at your hand) have relaxed the measure and form of religious life; you have laid aside the pleasant yoke of

contemplation, and all regular observances; hospitality, alms, and those other offices of piety which of old time were exercised and ministered therein have decreased, and by your faults, your carelessness, your neglect and deed, do daily decrease more and more, and cease to be regarded—the pious vows of the founders are defrauded of their just intent; the antient rule of your order is deserted; and not a few of your fellow monks and brethren, as we most deeply grieve to learn, giving themselves over to a reprobate mind, laying aside the fear of God, do lead only a life of lasciviousness—nay, as is horrible to relate, be not afraid to defile the holy places, even the very churches of God, by infamous intercourse with nuns, &c.

"You yourself, moreover, among other grave enormities and abominable crimes whereof you are guilty, and for which you are noted and diffamed, have, in the first place, admitted a certain married woman, named Elena Germyn, who has separated herself without just cause from her husband, and for some time past has lived in adultery with another man, to be a nun or sister in the house or Priory of Pray, lying, as you pretend, within your jurisdiction. You have next appointed the same woman to be prioress of the said house, notwithstanding that her said husband was living at the time, and is still alive. And finally, Father Thomas Sudbury, one of your brother monks, publicly, notoriously, and without interference or punishment from you, has associated, and still associates, with this woman as an adulterer with his harlot.

"Moreover, divers other of your brethren and fellow monks have resorted, and do resort, continually to her and other women at the same place, as to a public brothel or receiving house, and have received no correction therefore.

"Nor is Pray the only house into which you have introduced disorder. At the nunnery of Sapwell, which you also contend to be under your jurisdiction, you change the prioresses and superiors again and again at your own will and caprice. Here, as well as at Pray,

you depose those who are good and religious; you promote to the highest dignities the worthless and the vicious. The duties of the order are cast aside, virtue is neglected; and by these means so much cost and extravagance has been caused, that to provide means for your indulgence you have introduced certain of your brethren to preside in their houses under the name of guardians, when in fact they are no guardians, but thieves and notorious villains; and with their help you have caused and permitted the goods of the same priories to be dispensed, or to speak more truly to be dissipated, in the above-described corruptions and other enormous and accursed offences. Those places once religious are rendered and reputed as it were profane and impious; and by your own and your creatures' conduct are so impoverished as to be reduced to the verge of ruin.

"In like manner, also, you have dealt with certain other cells of monks, which you say are subject to you, even within the monastery of the glorious proto-martyr, Alban himself. You have dilapidated the common property; you have made away with the jewels; the copses, the woods, the underwood, almost all the oaks and other forest trees, to the value of eight thousand marks and more, you have made to be cut down without distinction, and they have by you been sold and alienated. The brethren of the abbey, some of whom, as is reported, are given over to all the evil things of the world, neglect the service of God altogether. They live with harlots and mistresses publicly and continuously, within the precincts of the monastery and without. Some of them, who are covetous of honour and promotion, and desirous therefore of pleasing your cupidity, have stolen and made away with the chalices and other jewels of the church. They have even sacrilegiously extracted the precious stones from the very shrine of St. Alban; and you have not punished these men, but have rather knowingly supported and maintained them. If any of your brethren be living justly and religiously, if any be wise and virtuous, these you straightway depress and hold in hatred. . . . You . . ."

But we need not transcribe further this overwhelming document. It pursues its way through mire and filth to its most lame and impotent conclusion. After all this, the abbot was not deposed; he was invited merely to reconsider his doings, and if possible amend them. Such was Church discipline, even under an extraordinary commission from Rome. But the most incorrigible Anglican will scarcely question the truth of a picture drawn by such a hand; and it must be added that this one unexceptionable indictment lends at once assured credibility to the reports which were presented fifty years later, on the general visitation. There is no longer room for the presumptive objection that charges so revolting could not be true. We see that in their worst form they could be true, and the evidence of Legh and Leghton, of Rice and Bedyll, as it remains in their letters to Cromwell, must be shaken in detail, or else it must be accepted as correct. We cannot dream that Archbishop Morton was mistaken, or was misled by false information. St. Albans was no obscure priory in a remote and thinly-peopled county. The Abbot of St. Albans was a peer of the realm, taking precedence of bishops, living in the full glare of notoriety, within a few miles of London. The archbishop had ample means of ascertaining the truth; and, we may be sure, had taken care to examine his ground before he left on record so tremendous an accusation. This story is true—as true as it is piteous. We will pause a moment over it before we pass from this, once more to ask our passionate Church friends whether still they will persist that the abbeys were no worse under the Tudors than they had been in their origin, under the Saxons, or under the first Norman and Plantagenet kings. No, indeed, it was not so. The abbeys which towered in the midst of the English towns, the houses clustered at their feet like subjects round some majestic queen, were images indeed of the civil supremacy which the Church of the Middle Ages had asserted for itself; but they were images also of an inner spiritual sublimity, which had won the homage of grateful and admiring nations.

The heavenly graces had once descended upon the monastic orders, making them ministers of mercy, patterns of celestial life, breathing witnesses of the power of the Spirit in renewing and sanctifying the heart. And then it was that art and wealth and genius poured out their treasures to raise fitting tabernacles for the dwelling of so divine a soul. Alike in the village and the city, amongst the unadorned walls and lowly roofs which closed in the humble dwellings of the laity, the majestic houses of the Father of mankind and of his especial servants rose up in sovereign beauty. And ever at the sacred gates sat Mercy, pouring out relief from a never-failing store to the poor and the suffering; ever within the sacred aisles the voices of holy men were pealing heavenwards in intercession for the sins of mankind; and such blessed influences were thought to exhale around those mysterious precincts, that even the poor outcasts of society—the debtor, the felon, and the outlaw—gathered round the walls as the sick men sought the shadow of the apostle, and lay there sheltered from the avenging hand, till their sins were washed from off their souls. The abbeys of the middle ages floated through the storms of war and conquest, like the ark upon the waves of the flood, in the midst of violence remaining inviolate, through the awful reverence which surrounded them. The abbeys, as Henry's visitors found them, were as little like what they once had been, as the living man in the pride of his growth is like the corpse which the earth makes haste to hide for ever.

The official letters which reveal the condition into which the monastic establishments had degenerated, are chiefly in the Cotton Library, and a large number of them have been published by the Camden Society. Besides these, however, there are in the Rolls House many other documents which confirm and complete the statements of the writers of those letters. There is a part of what seems to have been a digest of the *Black Book*—an epitome of iniquities, under the title of the *Compendium Compertorum*. There are also reports from private persons, private entreaties for inquiry,

depositions of monks in official examinations, and other similar papers, which, in many instances, are too offensive to be produced, and may rest in obscurity, unless contentious persons compel us to bring them forward. Some of these, however, throw curious light on the habits of the time, and on the collateral disorders which accompanied the more gross enormities. They show us, too, that although the dark tints predominate, the picture was not wholly black; that as just Lot was in the midst of Sodom, yet was unable by his single presence to save the guilty city from destruction, so in the latest era of monasticism, there were types yet lingering of an older and fairer age, who, nevertheless, were not delivered, like the patriarch, but perished most of them with the institution to which they belonged. The hideous exposure is not untinted with fairer lines; and we see traits here and there of true devotion, mistaken but heroic.

Of these documents two specimens shall be given in this place, one of either kind; and both, so far as we know, new to modern history. The first is so singular, that we print it as it is found—a genuine antique, fished up, in perfect preservation, out of the wreck of the old world.

About eight miles from Ludlow, in the county of Herefordshire, once stood the Abbey of Wigmore. There was Wigmore Castle, a stronghold of the Welsh Marches, now, we believe, a modern, well-conditioned mansion; and Wigmore Abbey, of which we do not hear that there are any remaining traces. Though now vanished, however, like so many of its kind, three hundred years ago the house was in vigorous existence; and when the stir commenced for an inquiry, the proceedings of the abbot of this place gave occasion to a memorial which stands in the Rolls collection as follows:[1]—

"Articles to be objected against John Smart, Abbot of the Monastery of Wigmore, in the county of Hereford,

[1] Rolls House MS., *Miscellaneous Papers*, First Series. 356.

to be exhibited to the Right Honourable Lord Thomas Cromwell, the Lord Privy Seal and Vicegerent to the King's Majesty.

"1. The said abbot is to be accused of simony, as well for taking money for advocation and putations of benefices, as for giving of orders, or, more truly, selling them, and that to such persons which have been rejected elsewhere, and of little learning and light consideration.

"2. The said abbot hath promoted to orders many scholars, when all other bishops did refrain to give any for certain good ordinances devised by the King's Majesty and his Council for the common weal of this realm. Then resorted to the said abbot, scholars out of all parts, whom he would promote to orders by sixty at a time, and sometimes more, and otherwhiles less. And sometimes the said abbot would give orders by night within his chamber; and otherwise in the church early in the morning, and now and then at a chapel out of the abbey. So that there be many unlearned and light priests made by the said abbot, and in the diocese of Llandaff, and in the places afore named—a thousand, as it is esteemed, by the space of this seven years he hath made priests, and received not so little money of them as a thousand pounds for their orders.

"3. Item, that the said abbot now of late, when he could not be suffered to give general orders, weekly for the most part doth give orders by pretence of dispensation; and by that colour he promoteth them to orders by two and three, and takes much money of them, both for their orders and for to purchase their dispensations after the time he hath promoted them to their orders.

"4. Item, the said abbot hath hurt and dismayed his tenants by putting them from their leases, and by enclosing their commons from them, and selling and utter wasting of the woods that were wont to relieve and succour them.

"5. Item, the said abbot hath sold corradyes, to the damage of the said monastery.

"6. Item, the said abbot hath alienate and sold the jewels and plate of the monastery, to the value of five hundred marks, *to purchase of the Bishop of Rome his bulls to be a bishop, and to annex the said abbey to his bishopric, to that intent that he should not for his misdeeds be punished, or deprived from his said abbey.*

"7. Item, that the said abbot, long after that other bishops had renounced the Bishop of Rome, and professed them to the King's Majesty, did use, but more verily usurped, the office of a bishop by virtue of his first bulls purchased from Rome, till now of late, as it will appear by the date of his confirmation, if he have any.

"8. Item, that he the said abbot hath lived viciously, and kept to concubines divers and many women that is openly known.

"9. Item, that the said abbot doth yet continue his vicious living, as it is known, openly.

"10. Item, that the said abbot hath spent and wasted much of the goods of the said monastery upon the foresaid women.

"11. Item, that the said abbot is malicious and very wrathful, not regarding what he saith or doeth in his fury or anger.

"12. Item, that one Richard Gyles bought of the abbot and convent of Wigmore a corradye, and a chamber for him and his wife for term of their lives; and when the said Richard Gyles was aged and was very weak, he disposed his goods, and made executors to execute his will. And when the said abbot now being —— perceived that the said Richard Gyles was rich, and had not bequested so much of his goods to him as he would have had, the said abbot then came to the chamber of the said Richard Gyles, and put out thence all his friends and kinsfolk that kept him in his sickness; and then the said abbot set his brother and other of his servants to keep the sick man; and the night next coming after the said Richard Gyles's coffer was broken, and thence taken all that was in the same, to the value of forty marks; and long after the said abbot confessed, before

the executors of the said Richard Gyles, that it was his deed.

"13. Item, that the said abbot, after he had taken away the goods of the said Richard Gyles, used daily to reprove and check the said Richard Gyles, and inquire of him where was more of his coin and money; and at the last the said abbot thought he lived too long, and made the sick man, after much sorry keeping, to be taken from his feather-bed, and laid upon a cold mattress, and kept his friends from him to his death.

"15. Item, that the said abbot consented to the death and murdering of one John Tichhill, that was slain at his procuring, at the said monastery, by Sir Richard Cubley, canon and chaplain to the said abbot; which canon is and ever hath been since that time chief of the said abbot's council; and is supported to carry crossbowes, and to go whither he lusteth at any time, to fishing and hunting in the king's forests, parks, and chases; but little or nothing serving the quire, as other brethren do, neither corrected of the abbot for any trespass he doth commit.

"16. Item, that the said abbot hath been perjured oft, as is to be proved, and is proved; and as it is supposed, did not make a true inventory of the goods, chattels, and jewels of his monastery to the King's Majesty and his council.

"17. Item, that the said abbot hath infringed all the king's injunctions which were given him by Doctor Cave to observe and keep; and when he was denounced *in pleno capitulo* to have broken the same, he would have put in prison the brother as did denounce him to have broken the same injunctions, save that he was let by the convent there.

"18. Item, that the said abbot hath openly preached against the doctrine of Christ, saying he ought not to love his enemy, but as he loves the devil; and that he should love his enemy's soul, but not his body.

"19. Item, that the said abbot hath taken but small regard to the good-living of his household.

"20. Item, that the said abbot hath had and hath yet

a special favour to misdoers and manquellers, thieves, deceivers of their neighbours, and by them [is] most ruled and counselled.

"21. Item, that the said abbot hath granted leases of farms and advocations first to one man, and took his fine, and also hath granted the same lease to another man for more money; and then would make to the last taker a lease or writing, with an antedate of the first lease, which hath bred great dissension among gentlemen —as Master Blunt and Master Moysey, and other takers of such leases—and that often.

"22. Item, the said abbot having the contrepaynes of leases in his keeping, hath, for money, rased out the number of years mentioned in the said leases, and writ a fresh number in the former taker's lease, and in the contrepayne thereof, to the intent to defraud the taker or buyer of the residue of such leases, of whom he hath received the money.

"23. Item, the said abbot hath not, according to the foundation of his monastery, admitted freely tenants into certain alms-houses belonging to the said monastery; but of them he hath taken large fines, and some of them he hath put away that would not give him fines: whither poor, aged, and impotent people were wont to be freely admitted, and [to] receive the founder's alms that of the old customs [were] limited to the same—which alms is also diminished by the said abbot.

"24. Item, that the said abbot did not deliver the bulls of his bishopric, that he purchased from Rome, to our sovereign lord the king's council till long after the time he had delivered and exhibited the bulls of his monastery to them.

"25. Item, that the said abbot hath detained and yet doth detain servants' wages; and often when the said servants hath asked their wages, the said abbot hath put them into the stocks, and beat them.

"26. Item, the said abbot, in times past, hath had a great devotion to ride to Llangarvan, in Wales, upon Lammas-day, to receive pardon there; and on the even he would visit one Mary Hawle, an old acquaintance

of his, at the Welsh Poole; and on the morrow ride to the foresaid Llangarvan, to be confessed and absolved, and the same night return to company with the said Mary Hawle, at the Welsh Poole aforesaid, and Kateryn, the said Mary Hawle her first daughter, whom the said abbot long hath kept to concubine, and had children by her, that he lately married at Ludlow. And [there be] others that have been taken out of his chamber and put in the stocks within the said abbey, and others that have complained upon him to the king's council of the Marches of Wales; and the woman that dashed out his teeth, that he would have had by violence, I will not name now, nor other men's wives, lest it would offend your good lordship to read or hear the same.

"27. Item, the said abbot doth daily embezzle, sell, and convey the goods, and chattels, and jewels of the said monastery, having no need so to do; for it is thought that he hath a thousand marks or two thousand lying by him that he hath gotten by selling of orders, and the jewels and plate of the monastery and corradyes; and it is to be feared that he will alienate all the rest, unless your good lordship speedily make redress and provision to let the same.

"28. Item, the said abbot was accustomed yearly to preach at Leyntwarden on the Festival of the Nativity of the Virgin Mary, where and when the people were wont to offer to an image there, and to the same the said abbot in his sermons would exhort them and encourage them. But now the oblations be decayed, the abbot, espying the image then to have a cote of silver plate and gilt, hath taken away of his own authority the said image, and the plate turned to his own use; and left his preaching there, saying it is no manner profit to any man, and the plate that was about the said image was named to be worth forty pounds.

"29. Item, the said abbot hath ever nourished enmity and discord among his brethren; and hath not encouraged them to learn the laws and the mystery of Christ. But he that least knew was most cherished

by him; and he hath been highly displeased and [hath] disdained when his brothers would say that 'it is God's precept and doctrine that ye ought to prefer before your ceremonies and vain constitutions.' This saying was high disobedient, and should be grievously punished; when that lying, obloquy, flattery, ignorance, derision, contumely, discord, great swearing, drinking, hypocrisy, fraud, superstition, deceit, conspiracy to wrong their neighbour, and other of that kind, was had in special favour and regard. Laud and praise be to God that hath sent us the true knowledge. Honour and long prosperity to our sovereign lord, and his noble council that teaches to advance the same. Amen.

"By John Lee, your faithful bedeman, and canon of the said monastery of Wigmore.

"Postscript. My good lord, there is in the said abbey a cross of fine gold and precious stones, whereof one diamond was esteemed by Doctor Booth, Bishop of Hereford, worth a hundred marks. In that cross is enclosed a piece of wood, named to be of the cross that Christ died upon, and to the same hath been offering. And when it should be brought down to the church from the treasury, it was brought down with lights, and like reverence as should have been done to Christ Himself. I fear lest the abbot upon Sunday next, when he may enter the treasury, will take away the said cross and break it, or turn it to his own use, with many other precious jewels that be there.

"All these articles afore written be true as to the substance and true meaning of them, though peradventure for haste and lack of counsel some words be set amiss or out of their place. That I will be ready to prove forasmuch as lies in me, when it shall like your honourable lordship to direct your commission to men (or any man) that will be indifferent and not corrupt to sit upon the same, at the said abbey, where the witnesses and proofs be most ready and the truth is best known, or at any other place where it shall be thought most convenient by your high discretion and authority."

The statutes of Provisors, commonly called Premunire statutes, which forbade all purchases of bulls from Rome under penalty of outlawry, have been usually considered in the highest degree oppressive; and more particularly the public censure has fallen upon the last application of those statutes, when, on Wolsey's fall, the whole body of the clergy were laid under a premunire, and only obtained pardon on payment of a serious fine. Let no one regret that he has learnt to be tolerant to Roman Catholics as the nineteenth century knows them. But it is a spurious charity, which, to remedy a modern injustice, hastens to its opposite; and when philosophic historians indulge in loose invective against the statesmen of the Reformation, they show themselves unfit to be trusted with the custody of our national annals. The Acts of Parliament speak plainly of the enormous abuses which had grown up under these bulls. Yet even the emphatic language of the statutes scarcely prepares us to find an abbot able to purchase with jewels stolen from his own convent a faculty to confer holy orders, though he had never been consecrated bishop, and to make a thousand pounds by selling the exercise of his privileges. This is the most flagrant case which has fallen under the eyes of the present writer. Yet it is but a choice specimen out of many. He was taught to believe, like other modern students of history, that the papal dispensations for immorality, of which we read in Fox and other Protestant writers, were calumnies, but he has been forced against his will to perceive that the supposed calumnies were but the plain truth; he has found among the records—for one thing, a list of more than twenty clergy in one diocese who had obtained licences to keep concubines.[1] After some experience, he advises all persons who are anxious to understand the English Reformation to place implicit confidence in the Statute Book. Every fresh record which is brought to light is a fresh evidence in its favour. In the fluctuations of

[1] Tanner MS. 105, Bodleian Library, Oxford.

the conflict there were parliaments, as there were princes, of opposing sentiments; and measures were passed, amended, repealed, or censured, as Protestants and Catholics came alternately into power. But whatever were the differences of opinion, the facts on either side which are stated in an Act of Parliament may be uniformly trusted. Even in the attainders for treason and heresy we admire the truthfulness of the details of the indictments, although we deplore the prejudice which at times could make a crime of virtue.

We pass on to the next picture. Equal justice, or some attempt at it, was promised, and we shall perhaps part from the friends of the monasteries on better terms than they believe. At least, we shall add to our own history and to the Catholic martyrology a story of genuine interest.

We have many accounts of the abbeys at the time of their actual dissolution. The resistance or acquiescence of superiors, the dismissals of the brethren, the sale of the property, the destruction of relics, &c., are all described. We know how the windows were taken out, how the glass appropriated, how the "melter" accompanied the visitors to run the lead upon the roofs, and the metal of the bells into portable forms. We see the pensioned regulars filing out reluctantly, or exulting in their deliverance, discharged from their vows, furnished each with his "secular apparel," and his purse of money, to begin the world as he might. These scenes have long been partially known, and they were rarely attended with anything remarkable. At the time of the suppression, the discipline of several years had broken down opposition, and prepared the way for the catastrophe. The end came at last, but as an issue which had been long foreseen.

We have sought in vain, however, for a glimpse into the interior of the houses at the first intimation of what was coming—more especially when the great blow was struck which severed England from obedience to Rome, and asserted the independence of the Anglican Church. Then, virtually, the fate of the monasteries was

decided. As soon as the supremacy was vested in the crown, inquiry into their condition could no longer be escaped or delayed; and then, through the length and breadth of the country, there must have been rare dismay. The account of the London Carthusians is indeed known to us, because they chose to die rather than yield submission where their consciences forbade them; and their isolated heroism has served to distinguish their memories. The Pope, as head of the Universal Church, claimed the power of absolving subjects from their allegiance to their king. He deposed Henry. He called on foreign princes to enforce his sentence; and, on pain of excommunication, commanded the native English to rise in rebellion. The king, in self-defence, was compelled to require his subjects to disclaim all sympathy with these pretensions, and to recognize no higher authority, spiritual or secular, than himself within his own dominions. The regular clergy throughout the country were on the Pope's side, secretly or openly. The Charter-house monks, however, alone of all the order had the courage to declare their convictions, and to suffer for them. Of the rest, we only perceive that they at last submitted; and since there was no uncertainty as to their real feelings, we have been disposed to judge them hardly as cowards. Yet we who have never been tried, should perhaps be cautious in our censures. It is possible to hold an opinion quite honestly, and yet to hesitate about dying for it. We consider ourselves, at the present day, persuaded honestly of many things; yet which of them should we refuse to relinquish if the scaffold were the alternative—or at least seem to relinquish, under silent protest?

And yet, in the details of the struggle at the Charter-house, we see the forms of mental trial which must have repeated themselves among all bodies of the clergy wherever there was seriousness of conviction. If the majority of the monks were vicious and sensual, there was still a large minority labouring to be true to their vows; and when one entire convent was capable of

sustained resistance, there must have been many where there was only just too little virtue for the emergency—where the conflict between interest and conscience was equally genuine, though it ended the other way. Scenes of bitter misery there must have been—of passionate emotion wrestling ineffectually with the iron resolution of the Government: and the faults of the Catholic party weigh so heavily against them in the course and progress of the Reformation, that we cannot willingly lose the few countervailing tints which soften the darkness of the case against them.

Nevertheless, for any authentic account of the abbeys at this crisis, we have hitherto been left to our imagination. A stern and busy Administration had little leisure to preserve records of sentimental struggles which led to nothing. The Catholics did not care to keep alive the recollection of a conflict in which, even though with difficulty, the Church was defeated. A rare accident only could have brought down to us any fragment of a transaction which no one had an interest in remembering. That such an accident has really occurred, we may consider as unusually fortunate. The story in question concerns the abbey of Woburn, and is as follows:—

At Woburn, as in many other religious houses, there were representatives of both the factions which divided the country; perhaps we should say of three—the sincere Catholics, the Indifferentists, and the Protestants. These last, so long as Wolsey was in power, had been frightened into silence, and with difficulty had been able to save themselves from extreme penalties. No sooner, however, had Wolsey fallen, and the battle commenced with the Papacy, than the tables turned, the persecuted became persecutors—or at least threw off their disguise—and were strengthened with the support of the large class who cared only to keep on the winning side. The mysteries of the faith came to be disputed at the public tables; the refectories rang with polemics; the sacred silence of the dormitories was broken for the first time by lawless speculation. The orthodox might have

appealed to the Government: heresy was still forbidden by law, and if detected, was still punished by the stake. But the orthodox among the regular clergy adhered to the Pope as well as to the faith, and abhorred the sacrilege of the Parliament as deeply as the new opinions of the Reformers. Instead of calling in the help of the law, they muttered treason in secret; and the Reformers, confident in the necessities of the times, sent reports to London of their arguments and conversations. The authorities in the abbey were accused of disaffection; and a commission of inquiry was sent down towards the end of the spring of 1536, to investigate. The depositions taken on this occasion are still preserved; and with the help of them, we can leap over three centuries of time, and hear the last echoes of the old monastic life in Woburn Abbey dying away in discord.

Where party feeling was running so high, there were of course passionate arguments. The Act of Supremacy, the spread of Protestantism, the power of the Pope, the state of England—all were discussed; and the possibilities of the future, as each party painted it in the colours of his hopes. The brethren, we find, spoke their minds in plain language, sometimes condescending to a joke.

Brother Sherborne deposes that the sub-prior "on Candlemas-day last past (February 2, 1536), asked him whether he longed not to be at Rome where all his bulls were?" Brother Sherborne answered that "his bulls had made so many calves, that he had burned them. Whereunto the sub-prior said he thought there were more calves now than there were then."

Then there were long and furious quarrels about "my Lord Privy Seal" (Cromwell), to one party the incarnation of Satan, to the other the delivering angel. Nor did matters mend when from the minister they passed to the master.

Dan John Croxton being in "the shaving-house" one day with certain of the brethren having their tonsures looked to, and gossiping, as men do on such occasions, one "Friar Lawrence did say that the King was dead."

Then said Croxton, "thanks be to God, his Grace is in good health, and I pray God so continue him;" and said further to the said Lawrence, "I advise thee to leave thy babbling." Croxton, it seems, had been among the suspected in earlier times. Lawrence said to him, "Croxton, it maketh no matter what thou sayest, for thou art one of the new world." Whereupon hotter still the conversation proceeded. "Thy babbling tongue," Croxton said, "will turn us all to displeasure at length." "Then," quoth Lawrence, "neither thou nor yet any of us all shall do well as long as we forsake our head of the Church, the Pope." "By the mass!" quoth Croxton, "I would thy Pope Roger were in thy belly, or thou in his, for thou art a false perjured knave to thy Prince." Whereunto the said Lawrence answered, saying, "By the mass, thou liest! I was never sworn to forsake the Pope to be our head, and never will be." "Then," quoth Croxton, "thou shalt be sworn spite of thine heart one day, or I will know why nay."

These and similar wranglings may be taken as specimens of the daily conversation at Woburn, and we can perceive how an abbot with the best intentions would have found it difficult to keep the peace. There are instances of superiors in other houses throwing down their command in the midst of the crisis in flat despair, protesting that their subject brethren were no longer governable. Abbots who were inclined to the Reformation could not manage the Catholics; Catholic abbots could not manage the Protestants; indifferent abbots could not manage either the one or the other. It would have been well for the Abbot of Woburn—or well as far as this world is concerned—if he, like one of these, had acknowledged his incapacity, and had fled from his charge.

His name was Robert Hobbes. Of his age and family, history is silent. We know only that he held his place when the storm rose against the Pope; that, like the rest of the clergy, he bent before the blast, taking the oath to the King, and submitting to the royal supremacy, but swearing under protest, as the phrase went,

with the outward, and not with the inward man—in fact, perjuring himself. Though infirm, so far, however, he was too honest to be a successful counterfeit, and from the jealous eyes of the Neologians of the abbey he could not conceal his tendencies. We have significant evidence of the *espionage* which was established over all suspected quarters, in the conversations and trifling details of conduct on the part of the abbot, which were reported to the Government.

In the summer of 1534, orders came that the Pope's name should be rased out wherever it was mentioned in the Mass books. A malcontent, by name Robert Salford, deposed that "he was singing mass before the abbot at St. Thomas's altar within the monastery, at which time he rased out with his knife the said name out of the canon." The abbot told him to "take a pen and strike or cross him out." The saucy monk said those were not the orders. They were to rase him out. "Well, well," the abbot said, "it will come again one day." "Come again, will it?" was the answer. "If it do, then we will put him in again; but I trust I shall never see that day." The mild abbot could remonstrate, but could not any more command; and the proofs of his malignant inclinations were remembered against him for the ear of Cromwell.

In the general injunctions, too, he was directed to preach against the Pope, and to expose his usurpation; but he could not bring himself to obey. He shrank from the pulpit; he preached but twice after the visitation, and then on other subjects, while in the prayer before the sermon he refused, as we find, to use the prescribed form. He only said, "You shall pray for the spirituality, the temporality, and the souls that be in the pains of purgatory; and did not name the King to be supreme head of the Church in neither of the said sermons, nor speak against the pretended authority of the Bishop of Rome."

Again, when Paul the Third, shortly after his election, proposed to call a general council at Mantua, against which, by advice of Henry the Eighth, the Germans

protested, we have a glimpse how eagerly anxious English eyes were watching for a turning tide. "Hear you," said the abbot one day, "of the Pope's holiness and the congregation of bishops, abbots, and princes gathered to the council at Mantua? They be gathered for the reformation of the universal Church; and here now we have a book of the excuse of the Germans, by which we may know what heretics they be, for if they were Catholics and true men as they pretend to be, they would never have refused to come to a general council."

So matters went with the abbot for some months after he had sworn obedience to the King. Lulling his conscience with such opiates as the casuists could provide for him, he watched anxiously for a change, and laboured with but little reserve to hold his brethren to their true allegiance.

In the summer of 1535, however, a change came over the scene, very different from the outward reaction for which he was looking: a better mind woke in the abbot; he learnt that in swearing what he did not mean with reservations and nice distinctions, he had lied to Heaven and lied to man: that to save his miserable life he had perilled his soul. When the oath of supremacy was required of the nation, Sir Thomas More, Bishop Fisher, and the monks of the Charterhouse, mistaken, as we believe, in judgment, but true to their consciences, and disdaining evasion or subterfuge, chose, with deliberate nobleness, rather to die than to perjure themselves. This is no place to enter on the great question of the justice or necessity of those executions; but the story of the so-called martyrdoms convulsed the Catholic world. The Pope shook upon his throne; the shuttle of diplomatic intrigue stood still; diplomatists who had lived so long in lies that the whole life of man seemed but a stage pageant, a thing of show and tinsel, stood aghast at the revelation of English sincerity, and a shudder of great awe ran through Europe. The fury of party leaves little room for generous emotion, and no pity was felt for these

men by the English Protestants. The Protestants knew well that if these same sufferers could have had their way, they would themselves have been sacrificed by hecatombs; and as they had never experienced mercy, so they were in turn without mercy. But to the English Catholics, who believed as Fisher believed, but who had not dared to suffer as Fisher suffered, his death and the death of the rest acted as a glimpse of the judgment day. Their safety became their shame and terror: and in the radiant example before them of true faithfulness, they saw their own falsehood and their own disgrace. So it was with Father Forest, who had taught his penitents in confession that they might perjure themselves, and who now sought a cruel death in voluntary expiation; so it was with Whiting, the Abbot of Glastonbury; so with others whose names should be more familiar to us than they are; and here in Woburn we are to see the feeble but genuine penitence of Abbot Hobbes. He was still unequal to immediate martyrdom, but he did what he knew might drag his death upon him if disclosed to the Government, and surrounded by spies he could have had no hope of concealment.

"At the time," deposed Robert Salford, "that the monks of the Charter-house, with other traitors, did suffer death, the abbot did call us into the Chapter-house, and said these words:—'Brethren, this is a perilous time, such a scourge was never heard since Christ's passion. Ye hear how good men suffer the death. Brethren, this is undoubted for our offences. Ye read, so long as the children of Israel kept the commandments of God, so long their enemies had no power over them, but God took vengeance of their enemies. But when they broke God's commandments, then they were subdued by their enemies, and so be we. Therefore let us be sorry for our offences. Undoubted He will take vengeance of our enemies; I mean those heretics that causeth so many good men to suffer thus. Alas, it is a piteous case that so much Christian blood should be shed. Therefore, good brethren, for the reverence of God, every one of you devoutly pray, and

say this Psalm, "O God, the heathen are come into thine inheritance; thy holy temple have they defiled, and made Jerusalem a heap of stones. The dead bodies of thy servants have they given to be meat to the fowls of the air, and the flesh of thy saints unto the beasts of the field. Their blood have they shed like water on every side of Jerusalem, and there was no man to bury them. We are become an open scorn unto our enemies, a very scorn and derision unto them that are round about us. Oh, remember not our old sins, but have mercy upon us, and that soon, for we are come to great misery. Help us, oh God of our salvation, for the glory of thy name. Oh, be merciful unto our sins for thy name's sake. Wherefore do the heathen say, Where is now their God?" Ye shall say this Psalm,' repeated the abbot, 'every Friday, after the litany, prostrate, when ye lie upon the high altar, and undoubtedly God will cease this extreme scourge.' And so," continues Salford, significantly, "the convent did say this aforesaid Psalm until there were certain that did murmur at the saying of it, and so it was left."

The abbot, it seems, either stood alone, or found but languid support; even his own familiar friends whom he trusted, those with whom he had walked in the house of God, had turned against him; the harsh air of the dawn of a new world choked him; what was there for him but to die. But his conscience still haunted him: while he lived he must fight on, and so, if possible, find pardon for his perjury. The blows in those years fell upon the Church thick and fast. In February, 1536, the Bill passed for the dissolution of the smaller monasteries; and now we find the sub-prior with the whole fraternity united to accuse him, so that the abbot had no one friend remaining.

"He did again call us together," says the next deposition, "and lamentably mourning for the dissolving the said houses, he enjoined us to sing 'Salvator mundi, salva nos omnes,' every day after lauds; and we murmured at it, and were not content to sing it for such cause; and so we did omit it divers days, for which

the abbot came unto the chapter, and did in manner rebuke us, and said we were bound to obey his commandment by our profession, and so did command us to sing it again with the versicle 'Let God arise, and let his enemies be scattered. Let them also that hate him flee before him.' Also he enjoined us at every mass that every priest did sing, to say the collect, 'Oh God, who despisest not the sighing of a contrite heart.' And he said if we did this with good and true devotion, God would so handle the matter, that it should be to the comfort of all England, and so show us mercy as he showed unto the children of Israel. And surely, brethren, there will come to us a good man that will rectify these monasteries again that be now suppresst, because 'God can of these stones raise up children to Abraham.'"

"Of these stones," perhaps, but less easily of the stony-hearted monks, who with pitiless smiles watched the abbot's sorrow, which should soon bring him to his ruin.

Time passed on, and as the world grew worse, so the abbot grew more lonely. Lonely and unsupported, he was unequal to the last effort of repentance, but he slowly strengthened himself for the trial. As Lent came on, the season brought with it a more special call to effort, which he did not fail to recognize. The conduct of the fraternity sorely disturbed him. They preached against all which he most loved and valued, in language purposely coarse; and the mild sweetness of the rebukes which he administered, showed plainly on which side lay, in the abbey of Woburn, the larger portion of the spirit of his Master and theirs. Now, when the passions of those times have died away, and we can look back with more indifferent eyes, how touching is the following. There was one Sir William, curate of Woburn chapel, whose tongue, it seems, was rough beyond the rest. The abbot met him one day, and spoke to him. "Sir William," he said, "I hear tell ye be a great railer. I marvel that ye rail so. I pray you teach my cure the scripture of God, and

that may be to edification. I pray you leave such railing. Ye call the pope a bear and a banson. Either he is a good man or an ill. *Domino suo stat aut cadit.* The office of a bishop is honourable. What edifying is this to rail? Let him alone."

But they would not let him alone, nor would they let the abbot alone. He grew "somewhat acrased," they said, vexed with feelings of which they had no experience. He fell sick, sorrow and the Lent discipline weighing upon him. The brethren went to see him in his room, Brother Dan Woburn among the rest, who said that he asked him how he did, and received for answer, "I would that I had died with the good men that died for holding with the pope. My conscience, my conscience doth grudge me every day for it." Life was fast losing its value for him. What was life to him or any man when bought with a sin against his soul? "If he be disposed to die, for that matter," the insolent Croxton said, "he may die as soon as he will."

All Lent he fasted and prayed; and his illness grew upon him; and at length in Passion week he thought all was over, and that he was going away. On Passion Sunday he called the brethren about him, and as they stood round his bed, with their cold, hard eyes, "he exhorted them all to charity," he implored them "never to consent to go out of their monastery; and if it chanced them to be put from it, they should in no wise forsake their habit." After these words, "being in a great agony, he rose out of his bed, and cried out and said, 'I would to God, it would please him to take me out of this wretched world; and I would I had died with the good men that have suffered death heretofore, for they were quickly out of their pain.'"[1] Then, half wandering, he began to mutter to himself aloud the thoughts which had been working in him in his struggles; and quoting St. Bernard's words about the pope, he exclaimed, "Tu quis es. Primatu Abel, guber-

[1] Meaning, as he afterwards said, More and Fisher and the Carthusians.

natione Noah, auctoritate Moses, judicatu Samuel potestate Petrus, unctione Christus. Aliæ ecclesiæ habent super se pastores. Tu pastor pastorum es."

Let it be remembered that this is no sentimental fiction begotten out of the brain of some ingenious novelist, but the record of the true words and sufferings of a genuine child of Adam, labouring in a trial too hard for him.

He prayed to die, and in good time death was to come to him; but not, after all, in the sick bed, with his expiation but half completed. A year before, he had thrown down the cross, when it was offered him. He was to take it again; the very cross which he had refused. He recovered. He was brought before the council; with what result, there are no means of knowing. To admit the papal supremacy when officially questioned was high treason. Whether he was constant, and received some conditional pardon, or whether his heart again for the moment failed him—whichever he did—the records are silent. This only we ascertain of him: that he was not put to death under the statute of supremacy. But two years later, when the official list was presented to the parliament of those who had suffered for their share in "the Pilgrimage of Grace," among the rest we find the name of Robert Hobbes, late Abbot of Woburn. To this solitary fact we can add nothing. The rebellion was put down, and in the punishment of the offenders there was unusual leniency; not more than thirty persons were executed, although forty thousand had been in arms. Those only were selected who had been most signally implicated. But they were all leaders in the movement; the men of highest rank, and therefore greatest guilt. They died for what they believed their duty; and the king and council did their duty in enforcing the laws against armed insurgents. He for whose cause each supposed themselves to be contending, has long since judged between them; and both parties perhaps now see all things with clearer eyes than was permitted to them on earth.

We too can see more distinctly in a slight degree. At least we will not refuse the Abbot Hobbes some memorial, brief though it be. And although twelve generations of Russells—all loyal to the Protestant ascendancy—have swept Woburn clear of Catholic associations, they, too, in these later days, will not regret to see revived the authentic story of its last abbot.

# THE PHILOSOPHY OF CHRISTIANITY

"We should do our utmost to encourage the Beautiful, for the Useful encourages itself."—GOETHE.

A MOSS rose-bud hiding her face among the leaves one hot summer morning, for fear the sun should injure her complexion, happened to let fall a glance towards her roots, and to see the bed in which she was growing. What a filthy place! she cried. What a home they have chosen for me! I, the most beautiful of flowers, fastened down into so detestable a neighbourhood! She threw her face into the air; thrust herself into the hands of the first passer-by who stopped to look at her, and escaped in triumph, as she thought, into the centre of a nosegay. But her triumph was short-lived: in a few hours she withered and died.

I was reminded of this story when hearing a living thinker of some eminence once say that he considered Christianity to have been a misfortune. Intellectually it was absurd, and practically an offence, over which he stumbled; and it would have been far better for mankind, he thought, if they could have kept clear of superstition, and followed on upon the track of the Grecian philosophy, so little do men care to understand the conditions which have made them what they are, and which has created for them that very wisdom in which they themselves are so contented. But it is strange, indeed, that a person who could deliberately adopt such a conclusion should trouble himself any more to look for truth. If a mere absurdity could make its way out of a little fishing village in Galilee, and spread through the whole

civilized world; if men are so pitiably silly, that in an age of great mental activity their strongest thinkers should have sunk under an absorption of fear and folly, should have allowed it to absorb into itself whatever of heroism, of devotion, self-sacrifice, and moral nobleness there was among them; surely there were nothing better for a wise man than to make the best of his time, and to crowd what enjoyment he can find into it, sheltering himself in a very disdainful Pyrrhonism from all care for mankind or for their opinions. For what better test of truth have we than the ablest men's acceptance of it; and if the ablest men eighteen centuries ago deliberately accepted what is now too absurd to reason upon, what right have we to hope that with the same natures, the same passions, the same understandings, no better proof against deception, we, like they, are not entangled in what, at the close of another era, shall seem again ridiculous? The scoff of Cicero at the divinity of Liber and Ceres (bread and wine) may be translated literally by the modern Protestant; and the sarcasms which Clement and Tertullian flung at the Pagan creed, the modern sceptic returns upon their own. Of what use is it to destroy an idol when another, or the same in another form takes immediate possession of the vacant pedestal?

But it is not so. Ptolemy was not perfect, but Newton had been a fool if he had scoffed at Ptolemy. Newton could not have been without Ptolemy, nor Ptolemy without the Chaldees; and as it is with the minor sciences, so far more is it with the science of sciences—the science of life, which has grown through all the ages from the beginning of time. We speak of the errors of the past. We, with this glorious present which is opening on us, we shall never enter on it, we shall never understand it, till we have learnt to see in that past, not error but instalment of truth, hard fought-for truth, wrung out with painful and heroic effort. The promised land is smiling before us, but we may not pass over into possession of it while the bones of our fathers who laboured through the wilderness lie bleaching on the sands, or a prey to the

unclean birds; we must gather them and bury them, and sum up their labours, and inscribe the record of their actions on their tombs as an honourable epitaph. If Christianity really is passing away, if it has done its work, and if what is left of it is now holding us back from better things, it is not for our bitterness but for our affectionate acknowledgment, not for our heaping contempt on what it is, but for our reverent and patient examination of what it has been, that it will be content to bid us farewell, and give us God speed on our further journey.

In the Natural History of Religions certain broad phenomena perpetually repeat themselves; they rise in the highest thought extant at the time of their origin; the conclusions of philosophy settle into a creed; art ornaments it, devotion consecrates it, time elaborates it. It grows through a long series of generations into the heart and habits of the people; and so long as no disturbing cause interferes, or so long as the idea at the centre of it survives; a healthy, vigorous, natural life shoots beautifully up out of it. But at last the idea becomes obsolete; the numbing influence of habit petrifies the spirit in the outside ceremonial, while quite new questions rise among the thinkers, and ideas enter into new and unexplained relations. The old formula will not serve; but new formulæ are tardy in appearing; and habit and superstition cling to the past, and policy vindicates it, and statecraft upholds it forcibly as serviceable to order, till, from the combined action of folly, and worldliness, and ignorance, the once beautiful symbolism becomes at last no better than "a whited sepulchre full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness." So it is now. So it was in the era of the Cæsars, out of which Christianity arose; and Christianity, in the form which it assumed at the close of the Arian controversy, was the deliberate solution which the most powerful intellects of that day could offer of the questions which had grown out with the growth of mankind, and on which Paganism had suffered shipwreck.

Paganism, as a creed, was entirely physical. When

Paganism rose men had not begun to reflect upon themselves, or the infirmities of their own nature. The bad man was a bad man—the coward a coward—the liar a liar—individually hateful and despicable. But in hating and despising such unfortunates, the old Greeks were satisfied to have felt all that was necessary about them; and how such a phenomenon as a bad man came to exist in this world, they scarcely cared to inquire. There is no evil spirit in the mythology as an antagonist of the gods. There is the Erinnys as the avenger of monstrous villanies; a Tartarus where the darkest criminals suffer eternal tortures. But Tantalus and Ixion are suffering for enormous crimes, to which the small wickedness of common men offers no analogy. Moreover, these and other such stories are but curiously ornamented myths, representing physical phenomena. But with Socrates a change came over philosophy; a sign—perhaps a cause—of the decline of the existing religion. The study of man superseded the study of nature: a purer Theism came in with the higher ideal of perfection, and sin and depravity at once assumed an importance the intensity of which made every other question insignificant. How man could know the good and yet choose the evil; how God could be all pure and almighty, and yet evil have broken into his creation, these were the questions which thenceforth were the perplexity of every thinker. Whatever difficulty there might be in discovering how evil came to be, the leaders of all the sects agreed at last upon the seat of it—whether *matter* was eternal, as Aristotle thought, or created, as Plato thought, both Plato and Aristotle were equally satisfied that the secret of all the shortcomings in this world lay in the imperfection, reluctancy, or inherent grossness of this impracticable substance. God would have everything perfect, but the nature of the element in which He worked in some way defeated His purpose. Death, disease, decay, clung necessarily to everything which was created out of it; and pain, and want, and hunger, and suffering. Worse than all, the spirit in its material body was opposed and borne down, its aspira-

tions crushed, its purity tainted by the passions and appetites of its companion, the fleshly lusts which waged perpetual war against it.

Matter was the cause of evil, and thenceforth the question was how to conquer it, or at least how to set free the spirit from its control.

The Greek language and the Greek literature spread behind the march of Alexander: but as his generals could only make their conquests permanent by largely accepting the Eastern manner, so philosophy could only make good its ground by becoming itself Orientalised.

The one pure and holy God whom Plato had painfully reasoned out for himself had existed from immemorial time in the traditions of the Jews, while the Persians who had before taught the Jews at Babylon the existence of an independent evil being now had him to offer to the Greeks as their account of the difficulties which had perplexed Socrates. Seven centuries of struggle, and many hundred thousand folios were the results of the remarkable fusion which followed. Out of these elements, united in various proportions, rose successively the Alexandrian philosophy, the Hellenists, the Therapeute, those strange Essene communists, with the innumerable sects of Gnostic or Christian heretics. Finally, the battle was limited to the two great rivals, under one or other of which the best of the remainder had ranged themselves — Manicheism and Catholic Christianity: Manicheism in which the Persian, Catholicism in which the Jewish element most preponderated. It did not end till the close of the fifth century, and it ended then rather by arbitration than by a decided victory which either side could claim. The Church has yet to acknowledge how large a portion of its enemy's doctrines it incorporated through the mediation of Augustine before the field was surrendered to it. Let us trace something of the real bearings of this section of the world's oriental history, which to so many moderns seems no better than an idle fighting over words and straws.

Facts witnessing so clearly that the especial strength

of evil lay, as the philosophers had seen, in matter, so far it was a conclusion which both Jew and Persian were ready to accept. The naked Aristotelic view of it being most acceptable to the Persian, the Platonic to the Hellenistic Jew. But the purer theology of the Jew forced him to look for a solution of the question which Plato had left doubtful, and to explain how evil crept into matter. He could not allow that what God had created could be of its own nature imperfect. God made it very good; some other cause had broken in to spoil it. Accordingly, as before he had reduced the independent Arimanes, whose existence he had learnt at Babylon, into a subordinate spirit; so now, not questioning the facts of disease, of death, of pain, of the infirmity of the flesh which the natural strength of the spirit was unable to resist, he accounted for them under the supposition that the first man had deliberately sinned, and by his sin had brought a curse upon the whole material earth, and upon all which was fashioned out of it. The earth was created pure and lovely—a garden of delight of its own free accord, loading itself with fruit and flower, and everything most exquisite and beautiful. No bird or beast of prey broke the eternal peace which reigned over its hospitable surface. In calm and quiet intercourse, the leopard lay down by the kid, the lion browsed beside the ox, and the corporeal frame of man, knowing neither decay, nor death, nor unruly appetite, nor any change or infirmity, was pure as the pure immortal substance of the unfallen angels. But with the fatal apple all this fair scene passed away, and creation as it seemed was hopelessly and irretrievably ruined. Adam sinned—no matter how—he sinned; the sin was the one terrible fact: moral evil was brought into the world by the only creature who was capable of committing it. Sin entered in, and death by sin; death and disease, storm and pestilence, earthquake and famine. The imprisoned passions of the wild animals were let loose, and earth and air became full of carnage; worst of all, man's animal nature came out in gigantic strength, the carnal

lusts, unruly appetites, jealousies, hatred, rapine, and murder; and then the law, and with it, of course, breaches of the law, and sin on sin. The seed of Adam was infected in the animal change which had passed over his person, and every child, therefore, thenceforth naturally engendered in his posterity, was infected with the curse which he had incurred. Every material organization thenceforward contained in itself the elements of its own destruction, and the philosophic conclusions of Aristotle were accepted and explained by theology. Already, in the popular histories, those who were infected by disease were said to be bound by Satan; madness was a "possession" by his spirit, and the whole creation from Adam till Christ groaned and travailed under Satan's power. The nobler nature in man still made itself felt; but it was a slave when it ought to command. It might will to obey the higher law, but the law in the members was over strong for it and bore it down. This was the body of death which philosophy detected but could not explain, and from which Christianity now came forward with its magnificent promise of deliverance.

The carnal doctrine of the sacraments which they are compelled to acknowledge to have been taught as fully in the early Church as it is now taught by the Roman Catholics, has long been the stumbling-block to Protestants. It was the very essence of Christianity itself. Unless the body could be purified, the soul could not be saved; or, rather, as from the beginning, soul and flesh were one man and inseparable, without his flesh, man was lost, or would cease to be. But the natural organization of the flesh was infected, and unless organization could begin again from a new original, no pure material substance could exist at all. He, therefore, by whom God had first made the world, entered into the womb of the Virgin in the form (so to speak) of a new organic cell, and around it, through the virtue of His creative energy, a material body grew again of the substance of his mother, pure of taint and clean as the first body of the first man when it passed out under

His hand in the beginning of all things. In Him thus wonderfully born was the virtue which was to restore the lost power of mankind. He came to redeem man; and, therefore, he took a human body, and he kept it pure through a human life, till the time came when it could be applied to its marvellous purpose. He died, and then appeared what was the nature of a material human body when freed from the limitations of sin. The grave could not hold it, neither was it possible that it should see corruption. It was real, for the disciples were allowed to feel and handle it. He ate and drank with them to assure their senses. But space had no power over it, nor any of the material obstacles which limit an ordinary power. He willed and his body obeyed. He was here, He was there. He was visible, He was invisible. He was in the midst of his disciples and they saw Him, and then He was gone, whither who could tell? At last He passed away to heaven; but while in heaven, He was still on earth. His body became the body of His Church on earth, not in metaphor, but in fact. His very material body, in which and by which the faithful would be saved. His flesh and blood were thenceforth to be their food. They were to eat it as they would eat ordinary meat. They were to take it into their system, a pure material substance, to leaven the old natural substance and assimilate it to itself. As they fed upon it it would grow into them, and it would become their own real body. Flesh grown in the old way was the body of death, but the flesh of Christ was the life of the world, over which death had no power. Circumcision availed nothing, nor uncircumcision—but a *new creature*—this new creature, which the child first put on in baptism, being born again into Christ of water and the spirit. In the Eucharist he was fed and sustained and going on from strength to strength, and ever as the nature of his body changed, being able to render a more complete obedience, he would at last pass away to God through the gate of the grave, and stand holy and perfect in the presence of Christ. Christ had indeed been ever pre-

sent with him; but because while life lasted some particles of the old Adam would necessarily cling to him, the Christian's mortal eye on earth cannot see Him. Hedged in by "his muddy vesture of decay," his eyes, like the eyes of the disciples of Emmaus, are holden, and only in faith he feels Him. But death, which till Christ had died had been the last victory of evil, in virtue of His submission to it, became its own destroyer, for it had power only over the tainted particles of the old substance, and there was nothing needed but that these should be washed away and the elect would stand out at once pure and holy, clothed in immortal bodies, like refined gold, the redeemed of God.

The being who accomplished a work so vast, a work compared to which the first creation appears but a trifling difficulty, what could He be but God? God Himself! Who but God could have wrested His prize from a power which half the thinking world believed to be His coequal and coeternal adversary. He was God. He was man also, for He was the second Adam—the second starting point of human growth. He was virgin born, that no original impurity might infect the substance which He assumed; and being Himself sinless, He showed in the nature of His person, after His resurrection, what the material body would have been in all of us except for sin, and what it will be when, after feeding on it in its purity, the bodies of each of us are transfigured after its likeness. Here was the secret of the spirit which set St. Simeon on his pillar and sent St. Anthony to the tombs—of the night watches, the weary fasts, the penitential scourgings, and life-long austerities which have been alternately the glory and the reproach of the mediæval saints. They would overcome their animal bodies, and anticipate in life the work of death in uniting themselves more completely to Christ by the destruction of the flesh which lay as a veil between themselves and Him.

And such, I believe, to have been the central idea of the beautiful creed which, for 1800 years, has tuned the

heart and formed the mind of the noblest of mankind. From this centre it radiated out and spread, as time went on, into the full circle of human activity, flinging its own philosophy and its own peculiar grace over the common detail of the common life of all of us. Like the seven lamps before the Throne of God, the seven mighty angels, and the seven stars, the seven sacraments shed over us a never ceasing stream of blessed influence. First there are the priests, a holy order set apart and endowed with mysterious power, representing Christ and administering his gifts. Christ, in his twelfth year, was presented in the temple, and first entered on His father's business; and the baptized child, when it has grown to an age to become conscious of its vow and of its privilege, again renews it in full knowledge of what it undertakes, and receives again sacramentally a fresh gift of grace to assist it forward on its way. In maturity it seeks a companion to share its pains and pleasures; and, again, Christ is present to consecrate the union. Marriage, which outside the church only serves to perpetuate the curse and bring fresh inheritors of misery into the world, He made holy by His presence at Cana, and chose it as the symbol to represent His own mystic union with His church.

Even saints cannot live without at times some spot adhering to them. The atmosphere in which we breathe and move is soiled, and Christ has anticipated our wants. Christ did penance forty days in the wilderness, not to subdue His own flesh, for that which was already perfect did not need subduing, but to give to penance a cleansing virtue to serve for our daily or our hourly ablution.

Christ consecrates our birth; Christ throws over us our baptismal robe of pure unsullied innocence. He strengthens us as we go forward. He raises us when we fall. He feeds us with the substance of His own most precious body. In the person of His minister he does all this for us, in virtue of that which in His own person he actually performed when a man living on this earth. Last of all, when all is drawing to its close with us, when life is past, when the work is done, and

the dark gate is near, beyond which the garden of an eternal home is waiting to receive us, His tender care has not forsaken us. He has taken away the sting of death, but its appearance is still terrible; and He will not leave us without special help at our last need. He tried the agony of the moment; and He sweetens the cup for us before we drink it. We are dismissed to the grave with our bodies anointed with oil, which He made holy in His last anointing before his passion, and then all is over. We lie down and seem to decay—to decay —but not all. Our natural body decays, the last remains of which we have inherited from Adam, but the spiritual body, that glorified substance which has made our life, and is our real body as we are in Christ, that can never decay, but passes off into the kingdom which is prepared for it; that other world where there is no sin, and God is all in all! Such is the Philosophy of Christianity. It was worn and old when Luther found it. Our posterity will care less to respect Luther for rending it in pieces, when it has learnt to despise the miserable fabric which he stitched together out of its tatters.

# A PLEA FOR THE FREE DISCUSSION OF THEOLOGICAL DIFFICULTIES

In the ordinary branches of human knowledge or inquiry, the judicious questioning of received opinions has been the sign of scientific vitality, the principle of scientific advancement, the very source and root of healthy progress and growth. If medicine had been regulated three hundred years ago by Act of Parliament; if there had been Thirty-nine Articles of Physic, and every licensed practitioner had been compelled, under pains and penalties, to compound his drugs by the prescriptions of Henry the Eighth's physician, Doctor Butts, it is easy to conjecture in what state of health the people of this country would at present be found. Constitutions have changed with habits of life, and the treatment of disorders has changed to meet the new conditions. New diseases have shown themselves of which Doctor Butts had no cognizance; new continents have given us plants with medicinal virtues previously unknown; new sciences, and even the mere increase of recorded experience, have added a thousand remedies to those known to the age of the Tudors. If the College of Physicians had been organized into a board of orthodoxy, and every novelty of treatment had been regarded as a crime against society, which a law had been established to punish, the hundreds who die annually from preventible causes would have been thousands and tens of thousands.

Astronomy is the most perfect of the sciences. The accuracy of the present theory of the planetary move-

ments is tested daily and hourly by the most delicate experiments, and the legislature, if it so pleased, might enact the first principles of these movements into a statute, without danger of committing the law of England to falsehood. Yet, if the legislature were to venture on any such paternal procedure, in a few years gravitation itself would be called in question, and the whole science would wither under the fatal shadow. There are many phenomena still unexplained to give plausibility to scepticism; there are others more easily formularized for working purposes in the language of Ptolemy; and there would be reactionists who would invite us to return to the safe convictions of our forefathers. What the world has seen the world may see again; and were it once granted that astronomy were something to be ruled by authority, new Popes would imprison new Galileos; the knowledge already acquired would be strangled in the cords which were intended to keep it safe from harm, and deprived of the free air on which its life depends it would dwindle and die.

A few years ago, an Inspector of Schools—a Mr. Jellinger Symonds—opening, perhaps for the first time, an elementary book on astronomy, came on something which he conceived to be a difficulty in the theory of lunar motion. His objection was on the face of it plausible. The true motions of the heavenly bodies are universally the opposite of the apparent motions. Mr. Symonds conceived that the moon could not revolve on its axis, because the same side of it was continually turned towards the earth; and if it were connected with the earth by a rigid bar—which, as he thought, would deprive it of power of rotation—the relative aspects of the two bodies would remain unchanged. He sent his views to the *Times*. He appealed to the common sense of the world, and common sense seemed to be on his side. The men of science were of course right; but a phenomenon, not entirely obvious, had been hitherto explained in language which the general reader could not readily comprehend. A few words of eluci-

dation cleared up the confusion: we do not recollect whether Mr. Symonds was satisfied or not; but most of us who had before received what the men of science told us with an unintelligent and languid assent, were set thinking for ourselves, and as a result of the discussion, exchanged a confused idea for a clear one.

It was an excellent illustration of the true claims of authority and of the value of open inquiry. The ignorant man has not as good a right to his own opinion as the instructed man. The instructed man, however right he may be, must not deliver his conclusions as axioms, and merely insist that they are true. The one asks a question, the other answers it, and all of us are the better for the business.

Now let us suppose the same thing to have happened, when the only reply to a difficulty was an appeal to the Astronomer Royal, where the rotation of the moon was an article of salvation decreed by the law of the land, and where all persons admitted to hold office under the State were required to subscribe to it. The Astronomer Royal—as it was, if we remember right, he was a little cross about it—would have brought an action against Mr. Symonds in the Court of Arches; Mr. Symonds would have been deprived of his inspectorship—for, of course, he would have been obstinate in his heresy; the world outside would have had an antecedent presumption that truth lay with the man who was making sacrifices for it, and that there was little to be said in the way of argument for what could not stand without the help of the law. Everybody could understand the difficulty; not everybody would have taken the trouble to attend to the answer. Mr. Symonds would have been a Colenso, and a good many of us would have been convinced in our secret hearts that the moon as little turned on its axis as the drawing-room table.

As it is in idea essential to a reverence for truth to believe in its capacity for self-defence, so practically in every subject except one, errors are allowed free room to express themselves, and that liberty of opinion which

is the life of knowledge, as surely becomes the death of falsehood. A method—the soundness of which is so evident that to argue in favour of it is almost absurd—might be expected to have been applied as a matter of course to the one subject on which mistake is supposed to be fatal, where to come to wrong conclusions is held to be a crime for which the Maker of the universe has neither pardon nor pity. Yet many reasons, not difficult to understand, have long continued to exclude theology from the region where free discussion is supposed to be applicable. That so many persons have a personal interest in the maintenance of particular views, would of itself be fatal to fair argument. Though they know themselves to be right, yet right is not enough for them unless there is might to support it, and those who talk most of faith show least that they possess it. But there are deeper and more subtle objections. The theologian requires absolute certainty, and there are no absolute certainties in science. The conclusions of science are never more than in a high degree probable; they are no more than the best explanations of phenomena which are attainable in the existing state of knowledge. The most elementary laws are called laws only in courtesy. They are generalizations which are not considered likely to require modification, but which no one pretends to be in the nature of the cause exhaustively and ultimately true. As phenomena become more complicated, and the data for the interpretation of them more inadequate, the explanations offered are put forward hypothetically, and are graduated by the nature of the evidence. Such modest hesitation is altogether unsuited to the theologian, whose certainty increases with the mystery and obscurity of his matter; his convictions admit of no qualification; his truth is sure as the axioms of geometry; he knows what he believes, for he has the evidence in his heart; if he inquire, it is with a foregone conclusion, and serious doubt with him is sin. It is in vain to point out to him the thousand forms of opinions for each of which the same internal witness is affirmed. The Mayo peasant,

crawling with bare knees over the flint points on Croagh Patrick, the nun prostrate before the image of St. Mary, the Methodist in the spasmodic extasy of a revival, alike are conscious of emotions in themselves which correspond to their creed: the more passionate—or, as some would say—the more unreasoning the piety, the louder and more clear is the voice within. But these varieties are no embarrassment to the theologian. He finds no fault with the method which is identical in them all. Whatever the party to which he himself belongs, he is equally satisfied that he alone has the truth; the rest are under illusions of Satan.

Again, we hear—or we used to hear when the High Church party were more formidable than they are at present—much about "the right of private judgment." Why, the eloquent Protestant would say, should I pin my faith upon the Church? the Church is but a congregation of fallible men, no better able to judge than I am. I have a right to my own opinion. It sounds like a paradox to say that free discussion is interfered with by a cause which, above all others, would have been expected to further it; but this in fact has been the effect, because it tends to remove the grounds of theological belief beyond the province of argument. No one talks of "a right of private judgment" in anything but religion; no one but a fool insists on his "right to his own opinion" with his lawyer or his doctor. Able men who have given their time to special subjects, are authorities upon it to be listened to with deference, and the ultimate authority at any given time is the collective general sense of the wisest men living in the department to which they belong. The utmost "right of private judgment" which anybody claims in such cases, is the choice of the physician to whom he will trust his body, or of the counsel to whom he will commit the conduct of his cause. The expression, as it is commonly used, implies a belief that in matters of religion, the criteria of truth are different in kind from what prevail elsewhere, and the efforts which have been made to bring the notion

into harmony with common sense and common subjects, have not been very successful. The High Church party used to say, as a point against the Evangelicals, that either "the right of private judgment" meant nothing, or it meant that a man had a right to be in the wrong. "No," said a writer in the *Edinburgh Review*, "it means only that if a man chooses to be in the wrong, no one else has a right to interfere with him. A man has no right to get drunk in his own house, but the policeman may not force a way into his house and prevent him." The illustration fails of its purpose. In the first place, the Evangelicals never contemplated a wrong use of the thing; they meant merely that they had a right to their own opinions as against the Church. They did not indeed put forward their claim quite so nakedly; they made it general, as sounding less invidious; but nobody ever heard an Evangelical admit a High Churchman's right to be a High Churchman or a Catholic's right to be a Catholic.

But, secondly, society has a most absolute right to prevent all manner of evil—drunkenness, and the rest of it, if it can—only in doing so, society must not use means which would create a greater evil than it would remedy. As a man can by no possibility be doing anything but most foul wrong to himself in getting drunk, society does him no wrong, but rather does him the greatest benefit if it can possibly keep him sober; and in the same way, as a false belief in serious matters is among the greatest of misfortunes, so to drive it out of a man, by the whip, if it cannot be managed by persuasion, is an act of brotherly love and affection, provided the belief really and truly is false, and you have a better to give him in the place of it. The question is not what to do, but merely "how to do it;" although Mr. Mill, in his love of "liberty," thinks otherwise. Mr. Mill demands for every man a right to say out his convictions in plain language, whatever they may be; and so far as he means that there should be no Act of Parliament to prevent him, he is perfectly just in what he says. But when Mr. Mill goes from Parlia-

ment to public opinion, when he lays down as a general principle that the free play of thought is unwholesomely interfered with by society, he would take away the sole protection which we possess from the inroads of any kind of folly. His dread of tyranny is so great, that he thinks a man better off with a false opinion of his own than with a right opinion inflicted upon him from without; while for our own part we should be grateful for tyranny or for anything else which would perform so useful an office for us.

Public opinion may be unjust at particular times and on particular subjects; we believe it to be both unjust and unwise on the matter of which we are at present speaking: but on the whole, it is like the ventilation of a house, which keeps the air pure; much in this world has to be taken for granted, and we cannot be for ever arguing over our first principles. If a man persists in talking of what he does not understand, he is put down; if he sports loose views on morals at a decent dinner party, the better sort of people fight shy of him, and he is not invited again; if he profess himself a Buddhist or a Mahometan, it is assumed that he has not adopted those beliefs on serious conviction, but rather in wilful levity and eccentricity which does not deserve to be tolerated. Men have no right to make themselves bores and nuisances; and the common sense of mankind inflicts wholesome inconveniences on those who carry their "right of private judgment" to any such extremities. It is a check, the same in kind as that which operates so wholesomely in the sciences. Mere folly is extinguished in contempt; objections reasonably urged obtain a hearing and are reasonably met. New truths, after encountering sufficient opposition to test their value, make their way into general reception.

A further cause which has operated to prevent theology from obtaining the benefit of free discussion is the interpretation popularly placed upon the constitution of the Church Establishment. For fifteen centuries of its existence, the Christian Church was supposed to be

under the immediate guidance of the Holy Spirit, which miraculously controlled its decisions, and precluded the possibility of error. This theory broke down at the Reformation, but it left behind it a confused sense that theological truth was in some way different from other truth; and partly on grounds of public policy, partly because it was supposed to have succeeded to the obligations and the rights of the Papacy, the State took upon itself to fix by statute the doctrines which should be taught to the people. The distractions created by divided opinions were then dangerous. Individuals did not hesitate to ascribe to themselves the infallibility which they denied to the Church. Everybody was intolerant upon principle, and was ready to cut the throat of an opponent whom his arguments had failed to convince. The State, while it made no pretensions to Divine guidance, was compelled to interfere in self-protection; and to keep the peace of the realm, and to prevent the nation from tearing itself in pieces, a body of formulas was enacted, for the time broad and comprehensive, within which opinion might be allowed convenient latitude, while forbidden to pass beyond the border.

It might have been thought that in abandoning for itself, and formally denying to the Church its pretensions to immunity from error, the State could not have intended to bind the conscience. When this or that law is passed, the subject is required to obey it, but he is not required to approve of the law as just. The Prayer-Book and the Thirty-nine Articles, so far as they are made obligatory by Act of Parliament, are as much laws as any other statute. They are a rule to conduct; it is not easy to see why they should be more; it is not easy to see why they should have been supposed to deprive clergymen of a right to their opinions, or to forbid discussion of their contents. The judge is not forbidden to ameliorate the law which he administers. If in discharge of his duty he has to pronounce a sentence which he declares at the same time that he thinks unjust, no indignant public accuses him

of dishonesty, or requires him to resign his office. The soldier is asked no questions as to the legitimacy of the war on which he is sent to fight; nor need he throw up his commission if he think the quarrel a bad one. Doubtless, if a law was utterly iniquitous—if a war was unmistakably wicked—honourable men might feel uncertain what to do, and would seek some other profession rather than continue instruments of evil. But within limits, and in questions of detail, where the service is generally good and honourable, we leave opinion its free play, and exaggerated scrupulousness would be folly or something worse. Somehow or other, however, this wholesome freedom is not allowed to the clergyman. The idea of absolute inward belief has been substituted for that of obedience; and the man who, in taking orders, signs the Articles and accepts the Prayer-Book, does not merely undertake to use the services in the one, and abstain from contradicting to his congregation the doctrines contained in the other; but he is held to promise what no honest man, without presumption, can undertake to promise, that he will continue to think to the end of his life as he thinks when he makes his engagement.

It is said that if his opinions change, he may resign, and retire into lay communion. We are not prepared to say that either the Convocation of 1562, or the Parliament which afterwards endorsed its proceedings, knew exactly what they meant, or did not mean; but it is quite clear that they did not contemplate the alternative of a clergyman's retirement. If they had, they would have provided means by which he could have abandoned his orders, and not have remained committed for life to a profession from which he could not escape. If the popular theory of subscription be true, and the Articles are articles of belief, a reasonable human being, when little more than a boy, pledges himself to a long series of intricate and highly-difficult propositions of abstruse divinity. He undertakes never to waver or doubt, never to allow his mind to be shaken, whatever the weight of argument or evidence brought to bear upon

him. That is to say, he promises to do what no man living has a right to promise to do. He is doing, on the authority of Parliament, precisely what the Church of Rome required him to do on the authority of a Council.

If a clergyman—in trouble amidst the abstruse subjects with which he has to deal, or unable to reconcile some new-discovered truth of science with the established formulas—puts forward his perplexities; if he ventures a doubt of the omniscience of the statesmen and divines of the sixteenth century, which they themselves disowned, there is an instant cry to have him stifled, silenced, or trampled down; and if no longer punished in life and limb, to have him deprived of the means on which life and limb can be supported, while with ingenious tyranny he is forbidden to maintain himself by any other occupation.

So far have we gone in this direction, that when the *Essays and Reviews* appeared, it was gravely said —and said by men who had no professional antipathy to them—that the writers had broken their faith. Laymen were free to say what they pleased on such subjects; clergymen were the hired exponents of the established opinions, and were committed to them in thought and word. It was one more anomaly where there were enough already. To say that the clergy, who are set apart to study a particular subject, are to be the only persons unpermitted to have an independent opinion upon it, is like saying that lawyers must take no part in the amendment of the statute-book, that engineers must be silent upon mechanism, and if an improvement is wanted in the art of medicine, physicians may have nothing to say to it.

These causes would perhaps have been insufficient to repress free inquiry, if there had been on the part of the really able men among us a determination to break the ice; in other words, if theology had preserved the same commanding interest for the more powerful minds with which it affected them three hundred years ago. But on the one hand, a sense, half serious, half

languid, of the hopelessness of the subject has produced an indisposition to meddle with it; on the other, there has been a creditable reluctance to disturb by discussion the minds of the uneducated or half-educated, to whom the established religion is simply an expression of the obedience which they owe to Almighty God, on the details of which they think little, and are therefore unconscious of its difficulties, while in general it is the source of all that is best and noblest in their lives and actions.

This last motive no doubt deserves respect, but the force which it once possessed it possesses no longer. The uncertainty which once affected only the more instructed extends now to all classes of society. A superficial crust of agreement, wearing thinner day by day, is undermined everywhere by a vague misgiving; and there is an unrest which will be satisfied only when the sources of it are probed to the core. The Church authorities repeat a series of phrases which they are pleased to call answers to objections; they treat the most serious grounds of perplexity as if they were puerile and trifling; while it is notorious that for a century past extremely able men have either not known what to say about them, or have not said what they thought. On the Continent the peculiar English view has scarcely a single educated defender. Even in England the laity keep their judgment in suspense, or remain warily silent.

"What religion are you, Mr. Rogers?" said a lady once.

"What religion, madam? I am of the religion of all sensible men."

"And what is that?" she asked.

"All sensible men, madam, keep that to themselves."

If Mr. Rogers had gone on to explain himself, he would have said perhaps that when the opinions of those best able to judge are divided, the questions at issue are doubtful. Reasonable men who are unable to give them special attention withhold their judgment, while those who are able, form their conclusions with

diffidence and modesty. But theologians will not tolerate diffidence; they demand absolute assent, and will take nothing short of it; and they affect therefore to drown in foolish ridicule whatever troubles or displeases them. The Bishop of Oxford talks in the old style of punishment. The Archbishop of Canterbury refers us to Usher as our guide in Hebrew chronology. The objections of the present generation of "infidels," he says, are the same which have been refuted again and again, and are such as a child might answer. The young man just entering upon the possession of his intellect, with a sense of responsibility for his belief, and more anxious for truth than for success in life, finds when he looks into the matter that the Archbishop has altogether misrepresented it; that in fact, like other official persons, he had been using merely a stereotyped form of words, to which he attached no definite meaning. The words are repeated year after year, but the enemies refuse to be exorcised. They come and come again from Spinoza and Lessing to Strauss and Renan. The theologians have resolved no single difficulty; they convince no one who is not convinced already; and a Colenso coming fresh to the subject, with no more than a year's study, throws the Church of England into convulsions.

If there were any real danger that Christianity would cease to be believed, it would be no more than a fulfilment of prophecy. The state in which the Son of Man would find the world at his coming he did not say would be a state of faith. But if that dark time is ever literally to come upon the earth, there are no present signs of it. The creed of eighteen centuries is not about to fade away like an exhalation, nor are the new lights of science so exhilarating that serious persons can look with comfort to exchanging one for the other. Christianity has abler advocates than its professed defenders, in those many quiet and humble men and women who in the light of it and the strength of it live holy, beautiful, and self-denying lives. The God that answers by fire is the God whom mankind will

acknowledge; and so long as the fruits of the Spirit continue to be visible in charity, in self-sacrifice, in those graces which raise human creatures above themselves, and invest them with that beauty of holiness which only religion confers, thoughtful persons will remain convinced that with them in some form or other is the secret of truth. The body will not thrive on poison, or the soul on falsehood; and as the vital processes of health are too subtle for science to follow; as we choose our food, not by the most careful chemical analysis, but by the experience of its effects upon the system; so when a particular belief is fruitful in nobleness of character, we need trouble ourselves very little with scientific demonstrations that it is false. The most deadly poison may be chemically undistinguishable from substances which are perfectly innocent. Prussic acid, we are told, is formed of the same elements, combined in the same proportions, as gum-arabic.

What that belief is for which the fruits speak thus so positively, it is less easy to divine. Religion from the beginning of time has expanded and changed with the growth of knowledge. The religion of the prophets was not the religion which was adapted to the hardness of heart of the Israelites of the Exodus. The Gospel set aside the Law; the creed of the early Church was not the creed of the middle ages, any more than the creed of Luther and Cranmer was the creed of St. Bernard and Aquinas. Old things pass away, new things come in their place; and they in their turn grow old, and give place to others; yet in each of the many forms which Christianity has assumed in the world, holy men have lived and died, and have had the witness of the Spirit that they were not far from the truth. It may be that the faith which saves is the something held in common by all sincere Christians, and by those as well who should come from the east and the west, and sit down in the kingdom of God, when the children of the covenant would be cast out. It may be that the true teaching of our Lord is overlaid with doctrines; and theology, when insisting on the reception of its

huge catena of formulas, may be binding a yoke upon our necks which neither we nor our fathers were able to bear.

But it is not the object of this article to put forward either this or any other particular opinion. The writer is conscious only that he is passing fast towards the dark gate which soon will close behind him. He believes that some kind of sincere and firm conviction on these things is of infinite moment to him, and, entirely diffident of his own power to find his way towards such a conviction, he is both ready and anxious to disclaim "all right of private judgment" in the matter. He wishes only to learn from those who are able to teach him. The learned prelates talk of the presumptuousness of human reason; they tell us that doubts arise from the consciousness of sin and the pride of the unregenerate heart. The present writer, while he believes generally that reason, however inadequate, is the best faculty to which we have to trust, yet is most painfully conscious of the weakness of his own reason; and once let the real judgment of the best and wisest men be declared; let those who are most capable of forming a sound opinion, after reviewing the whole relations of science, history, and what is now received as revelation, tell us fairly how much of the doctrines popularly taught they conceive to be adequately established, how much to be uncertain, and how much, if anything, to be mistaken; there is scarcely perhaps a single serious inquirer who would not submit with delight to a court which is the highest on earth.

Mr. Mansell tells us that in the things of God reason is beyond its depth, that the wise and the unwise are on the same level of incapacity, and that we must accept what we find established, or we must believe nothing. We presume that this dilemma itself is a conclusion of reason. Do what we will, reason is and must be our ultimate authority; and were the collective sense of mankind to declare Mr. Mansell right, we should submit to that opinion as readily as to another. But the collective sense of mankind is less acquiescent. He

has been compared to a man sitting on the end of a plank and deliberately sawing off his seat. It seems never to have occurred to him that, if he is right, he has no business to be a Protestant. What Mr. Mansell says to Professor Jowett, Bishop Gardiner in effect replied to Frith and Ridley. Frith and Ridley said that transubstantiation was unreasonable; Gardiner answered that there was the letter of Scripture of it, and that the human intellect was no measure of the power of God. Yet the Reformers somehow believed, and Mr. Mansell by his place in the Church of England seems to agree with them, that the human intellect was not so wholly incompetent. It might be a weak guide, but it was better than none; and they declared on grounds of mere reason, that Christ being in heaven and not on earth, 'it was contrary to the truth for a natural body to be in two places at once.' The common sense of the country was of the same opinion, and the illusion was at an end.

There have been "Aids to Faith" produced lately, and "Replies to the Seven Essayists," "Answers to Colenso," and much else of the kind. We regret to say that they have done little for us. The very life of our souls is at issue in the questions which have been raised, and we are fed with the professional commonplaces of the members of a close guild, men holding high office in the Church, or expecting to hold high office there; in either case with a strong temporal interest in the defence of the institution which they represent. We desire to know what those of the clergy think whose love of truth is unconnected with their prospects in life; we desire to know what the educated laymen, the lawyers, the historians, the men of science, the statesmen think; and these are for the most part silent, or confess themselves modestly uncertain. The professional theologians alone are loud and confident; but they speak in the old angry tone which rarely accompanies deep and wise convictions. They do not meet the real difficulties; they mistake them, misrepresent them, claim victories over adversaries with whom they have never even crossed

swords, and leap to conclusions with a precipitancy at which we can only smile. It has been the unhappy manner of their class from immemorial time; they call it zeal for the Lord, as if it were beyond all doubt that they were on God's side, as if serious inquiry after truth was something which they were entitled to resent. They treat intellectual difficulties as if they deserved rather to be condemned and punished than considered and weighed, and rather stop their ears and run with one accord upon any one who disagrees with them than listen patiently to what he has to say.

We do not propose to enter in detail upon the particular points which demand re-discussion. It is enough that the more exact habit of thought which science has engendered, and the closer knowledge of the value and nature of evidence, has notoriously made it necessary that the grounds should be reconsidered on which we are to believe that one country and one people was governed for sixteen centuries on principles different from those which we now find to prevail universally. One of many questions, however, shall be briefly glanced at, on which the real issue seems habitually to be evaded.

Much has been lately said and written on the authenticity of the Pentateuch and the other historical books of the Old Testament. The Bishop of Natal has thrown out in a crude form the critical results of the inquiries of the Germans, coupled with certain arithmetical calculations, for which he has a special aptitude. He supposes himself to have proved that the first five books of the Bible are a compilation of uncertain date, full of inconsistencies and impossibilities. The apologists have replied that the objections are not absolutely conclusive, that the events described in the book of Exodus might possibly, under certain combinations of circumstances, have actually taken place; and they then pass to the assumption that because a story is not necessarily false, therefore it is necessarily true. We have no intention of vindicating Dr. Colenso. His theological training makes his arguments very like those of his opponents, and he and

Dr. M'Call may settle their differences between themselves. The question is at once wider and simpler than any which has been raised in that controversy. Were it proved beyond possibility of error that the Pentateuch was written by Moses, that those and all the books of the Old and New Testaments were really the work of the writers whose names they bear; were the Mosaic cosmogony in harmony with physical discoveries; and were the supposed inconsistencies and contradictions shown to have no existence except in Dr. Colenso's imagination—we should not have advanced a single step towards making good the claim put forward for the Bible, that it is absolutely and unexceptionably true in all its parts. The "genuineness and authenticity" argument is irrelevant and needless. The clearest demonstration of the human authorship of the Pentateuch proves nothing about its immunity from errors. If there are no mistakes in it, it was not the workmanship of man; and if it was inspired by the Holy Spirit, there is no occasion to show that the hand of Moses was the instrument made use of. To the most excellent of contemporary histories, to histories written by eye-witnesses of the facts which they describe, we accord but a limited confidence. The highest intellectual competence, the most admitted truthfulness, immunity from prejudice, and the absence of temptation to mis-state the truth; these things may secure general credibility, but they are no guarantee for minute and circumstantial exactness. Two historians, though with equal gifts and equal opportunities, never describe events in exactly the same way. Two witnesses in a court of law, while they agree in the main, invariably differ in some particulars. It appears as if men could not relate facts precisely as they saw or as they heard them. The different parts of a story strike different imaginations unequally; and the mind, as the circumstances pass through it, alters their proportions unconsciously, or shifts the perspective. The credit which we give to the most authentic work of a man has no resemblance to that universal acceptance which is demanded for the Bible. It is not a difference of degree: it is a

difference in kind; and we desire to know on what ground this infallibility, which we do not question, but which is not proved, demands our belief. Very likely the Bible is thus infallible. Unless it is, there can be no moral obligation to accept the facts which it records: and though there may be intellectual error in denying them, there can be no moral sin. Facts may be better or worse authenticated; but all the proofs in the world of the genuineness and authenticity of the human handiwork cannot establish a claim upon the conscience. It might be foolish to question Thucydides' account of Pericles, but no one would call it sinful. Men part with all sobriety of judgment when they come on ground of this kind. When Sir Henry Rawlinson read the name of Sennacherib on the Assyrian marbles, and found allusions there to the Israelites in Palestine, we were told that a triumphant answer had been found to the cavils of sceptics, and a convincing proof of the inspired truth of the Divine Oracles. Bad arguments in a good cause are a sure way to bring distrust upon it. The Divine Oracles may be true, and may be inspired; but the discoveries at Nineveh certainly do not prove them so. No one supposes that the Books of Kings or the prophesies of Isaiah and Ezekiel were the work of men who had no knowledge of Assyria or the Assyrian Princes. It is possible that in the excavations at Carthage some Punic inscription may be found confirming Livy's account of the battle of Cannæ; but we shall not be obliged to believe therefore in the inspiration of Livy, or rather (for the argument comes to that) in the inspiration of the whole Latin literature.

We are not questioning the fact that the Bible is infallible; we desire only to be told on what evidence that great and awful fact concerning it properly rests. It would seem, indeed, as if instinct had been wiser than argument—as if it had been felt that nothing short of this literal and close inspiration could preserve the facts on which Christianity depends. The history of the early world is a history everywhere of marvels.

The legendary literature of every nation upon earth tells the same stories of prodigies and wonders, of the appearances of the gods upon earth, and of their intercourse with men. The lives of the saints of the Catholic Church, from the time of the Apostles till the present day, are a complete tissue of miracles resembling and rivalling those of the Gospels. Some of these stories are romantic and imaginative; some clear, literal, and prosaic; some rest on mere tradition; some on the sworn testimony of eye-witnesses; some are obvious fables; some are as well authenticated as facts of such a kind can be authenticated at all. The Protestant Christian rejects every one of them—rejects them without inquiry—involves those for which there is good authority and those for which there is none or little in one absolute, contemptuous, and sweeping denial. The Protestant Christian feels it more likely, in the words of Hume, that men should deceive or be deceived, than that the laws of nature should be violated. At this moment we are beset with reports of conversations with spirits, of tables miraculously lifted, of hands projected out of the world of shadows into this mortal life. An unusually able, accomplished person, accustomed to deal with common-sense facts, a celebrated political economist, and notorious for business-like habits, assured this writer that a certain mesmerist, who was my informant's intimate friend, had raised a dead girl to life. We should believe the people who tell us these things in any ordinary matter: they would be admitted in a court of justice as good witnesses in a criminal case, and a jury would hang a man on their word. The person just now alluded to is incapable of telling a wilful lie; yet our experience of the regularity of nature on one side is so uniform, and our experience of the capacities of human folly on the other is so large, that when they tell us these wonderful stories, most of us are contented to smile; we do not care so much as to turn out of our way to examine them.

The Bible is equally a record of miracles; but as

from other histories we reject miracles without hesitation, so of those in the Bible we insist on the universal acceptance: the former are all false, the latter are all true. It is evident that, in forming conclusions so sweeping as these, we cannot even suppose that we are being guided by what is called historical evidence. Were it admitted that as a whole the miracles of the Bible are better authenticated than the miracles of the saints, we should be far removed still from any large inference, that in the one set there is no room for falsehood, in the other no room for truth. The writer or writers of the Books of Kings are not known. The books themselves are in fact confessedly taken from older writings which are lost; and the accounts of the great prophets of Israel are a counterpart, curiously like, of those of the mediæval saints. In many instances the authors of the lives of these saints were their companions and friends. Why do we feel so sure that what we are told of Elijah or Elisha took place exactly as we read it? Why do we reject the account of St. Columba or St. Martin as a tissue of idle fable? Why should not God give a power to the saint which he had given to the prophet? We can produce no reason from the nature of things, for we know not what the nature of things is; and if down to the death of the Apostles the ministers of religion were allowed to prove their commission by working miracles, what right have we, on grounds either of history or philosophy, to draw a clear line at the death of St. John, to say that before that time all such stories were true, and after it all were false?

There is no point on which Protestant controversialists evade the real question more habitually than on that of miracles. They accuse those who withhold that unreserved and absolute belief which they require for all which they accept themselves, of denying that miracles are possible. That they assume to be the position taken up by the objector, and proceed easily to argue that man is no judge of the power of God. Of course he is not. No sane man ever raised his narrow

understanding into a measure of the possibilities of the universe; nor does any person with any pretensions to religion disbelieve in miracles of some kind. To pray is to expect a miracle. When we pray for the recovery of a sick friend, for the gift of any blessing, or the removal of any calamity, we expect that God will do something by an act of his personal will which otherwise would not have been done—that he will suspend the ordinary relations of natural cause and effect; and this is the very idea of a miracle. The thing we pray for may be given us, and no miracle may have taken place. It may be given to us by natural causes, and would have occurred whether we had prayed or not. But prayer itself in its very essence implies a belief in the possible intervention of a power which is above nature. The question about miracles is simply one of evidence—whether in any given case the proof is so strong that no room is left for mistake, exaggeration, or illusion, while more evidence is required to establish a fact antecedently improbable than is sufficient for a common occurrence.

It has been said recently by "A Layman," in a letter to Mr. Maurice, that the resurrection of our Lord is as well authenticated as the death of Julius Cæsar. It is far better authenticated, unless we are mistaken in supposing the Bible inspired; or if we admit as evidence that inward assurance of the Christian, which would make him rather die than disbelieve a truth so dear to him. But if the layman meant that there was as much proof of it, in the sense in which proof is understood in a court of justice, he could scarcely have considered what he was saying. Julius Cæsar was killed in a public place, in the presence of friend and foe, in a remarkable but still perfectly natural manner. The circumstances were minutely known to all the world, and were never denied or doubted by any one. Our Lord, however, seems purposely to have withheld such public proof of his resurrection as would have left no room for unbelief. He showed himself, "not to all the people" —not to his enemies, whom his appearance would have

overwhelmed—but "to witnesses chosen before;" to the circle of his own friends. There is no evidence which a jury could admit that he was ever actually dead. So unusual was it for persons crucified to die so soon, that Pilate, we are told, "marvelled." The subsequent appearances were strange, and scarcely intelligible. Those who saw him did not recognize him till he was made known to them in the breaking of bread. He was visible and invisible. He was mistaken by those who were most intimate with him for another person; nor do the accounts agree which are given by the different Evangelists. Of investigation in the modern sense (except in the one instance of St. Thomas, and St. Thomas was rather rebuked than praised,) there was none, and could be none. The evidence offered was different in kind, and the blessing was not to those who satisfied themselves of the truth of the fact by a searching inquiry, but who gave their assent with the unhesitating confidence of love.

St. Paul's account of his own conversion is an instance of the kind of testimony which then worked the strongest conviction. St. Paul, a fiery fanatic on a mission of persecution, with the midday Syrian sun streaming down upon his head, was struck to the ground, and saw in a vision our Lord in the air. If such a thing were to occur at the present day, and if a modern physician were consulted about it, he would say without hesitation, that it was an effect of an overheated brain, and that there was nothing in it extraordinary or unusual. If the impression left by the appearance had been too strong for such an explanation to be satisfactory, the person to whom it occurred, especially if he was a man of St. Paul's intellectual stature, would have at once examined into the facts otherwise known, connected with the subject of what he had seen. St. Paul had evidently before disbelieved our Lord's resurrection, had disbelieved it fiercely and passionately; we should have expected that he would at once have sought for those who could best have told him the details of the truth. St. Paul, however, did

nothing of the kind. He went for a year into Arabia, and when at last he returned to Jerusalem, he rather held aloof from those who had been our Lord's companions, and who had witnessed his ascension. He saw Peter, he saw James; "of the rest of the apostles saw he none." To him evidently the proof of the resurrection was the vision which he had himself seen. It was to that which he always referred when called on for a defence of his faith.

Of evidence for the resurrection in the common sense of the word there may be enough to show that something extraordinary occurred; but not enough, unless we assume the fact to be true on far other grounds, to produce any absolute and unhesitating conviction; and inasmuch as the resurrection is the keystone of Christianity, the belief in it must be something far different from that suspended judgment in which history alone would leave us.

Human testimony, we repeat, under the most favourable circumstances imaginable, knows nothing of "absolute certainty;" and if historical facts are bound up with the creed, and if they are to be received with the same completeness as the laws of conscience, they rest, and must rest, either on the divine truth of Scripture, or on the divine witness in ourselves. On human evidence, the miracles of St. Teresa and St. Francis of Assisi are as well established as those of the New Testament.

M. Ernest Renan has recently produced an account of the Gospel story which, written as it is by a man of piety, intellect, and imagination, is spreading rapidly through the educated world. Carrying out the principles with which Protestants have swept modern history clear of miracles to their natural conclusions, he dismisses all that is miraculous from the life of our Lord, and endeavours to reproduce the original Galilean youth who lived, and taught, and died in Palestine eighteen hundred years ago. We have no intention of reviewing M. Renan. He will be read soon enough by many who would better consider their peace of mind

by leaving him alone. For ourselves we are unable to see by what right, if he rejects the miraculous part of the narrative, he retains the rest; the imagination and the credulity which invent extraordinary incidents invent ordinary incidents also; and if the divine element in the life is legendary, the human may be legendary also. But there is one lucid passage in the introduction which we commend to the perusal of controversial theologians:—

No miracle such as those of which early histories are full has taken place under conditions which science can accept. Experience shows, without exception, that miracles occur only in times and in countries in which miracles are believed in, and in the presence of persons who are disposed to believe them. No miracle has ever been performed before an assemblage of spectators capable of testing its reality. Neither uneducated people, nor even men of the world, have the requisite capacity; great precautions are needed, and a long habit of scientific research. Have we not seen men of the world in our own time become the dupes of the most childish and absurd illusions? And if it be certain that no contemporary miracles will bear investigation, is it not possible that the miracles of the past, were we able to examine into them in detail, would be found equally to contain an element of error? It is not in the name of this or that philosophy, it is in the name of an experience which never varies that we banish miracles from history. We do not say a miracle is impossible, we say only that no miracle has ever yet been proved. Let a worker of miracles come forward to-morrow with pretensions serious enough to deserve examination. Let us suppose him to announce that he is able to raise a dead man to life. What would be done? A committee would be appointed, composed of physiologists, physicians, chemists, and persons accustomed to exact investigation; a body would then be selected which the committee would assure itself was really dead; and a place would be chosen where the experiment was to take place. Every precaution would be taken to leave no opening for uncertainty; and if, under those conditions, the restoration to life was effected, a probability would be arrived at which would be almost equal to certainty. An experiment, however, should always admit of being repeated.

What a man has done once he should be able to do again, and in miracles there can be no question of ease or difficulty. The performer would be requested to repeat the operation under other circumstances upon other bodies; and if he succeeded on every occasion, two points would be established: first, that there may be in this world such things as supernatural operations; and, secondly, that the power to perform them is delegated to, or belongs to, particular persons.

But who does not perceive that no miracle was ever performed under such conditions as these?

We have quoted this passage because it expresses with extreme precision and clearness the common-sense principle which we apply to all supernatural stories of our own time, which Protestant theologians employ against the whole cycle of Catholic miracles, and which M. Renan is only carrying to its logical conclusions in applying to the history of our Lord, if the Gospels are tried by the mere tests of historical criticism. The Gospels themselves tell us why M. Renan's conditions were never satisfied. Miracles were not displayed in the presence of sceptics to establish scientific truths. When the adulterous generation sought after a sign, the sign was not given; nay, it is even said that in the presence of unbelief our Lord was not able to work miracles. But science has less respect for that undoubting and submissive willingness to believe; and it is quite certain that if we attempt to establish the truth of the New Testament on the principles of Paley, if with Professor Jowett "we interpret the Bible as any other book," the element of miracle which has evaporated from the entire surface of human history will not maintain itself in the sacred ground of the Gospels, and the facts of Christianity will melt in our hands like a snow-ball.

Nothing less than a miraculous history can sustain the credibility of miracles, and nothing could be more likely if revelation be a reality and not a dream than that the history containing it should be saved in its composition from the intermixture of human infirmity. This is the position in which instinct long ago taught

Protestants to entrench themselves, and where alone they can hope to hold their ground: once established in these lines, they were safe and unassailable, unless it could be demonstrated that any fact or facts related in the Bible were certainly untrue.

Nor would it be necessary to say any more upon the subject. Those who believed Christianity would admit the assumption; those who disbelieved Christianity would repudiate it. The argument would be narrowed to that plain and single issue, and the elaborate treatises upon external evidence would cease to bring discredit upon the cause by their feebleness. Unfortunately—and this is the true secret of our present distractions—it seems certain that in some way or other this belief in inspiration itself requires to be revised. We are compelled to examine more precisely what we mean by the word. The account of the creation of man and the world which is given in Genesis, and which is made by St. Paul the basis of his theology, has not yet been reconciled with facts which science knows to be true. Death was in the world before Adam's sin, and unless Adam's age be thrust back to a distance which no ingenuity can torture the letter of Scripture into recognizing, men and women lived and died upon the earth whole millenniums before the Eve of Sacred History listened to the temptation of the snake. Neither has any such deluge as that from which, according to the received interpretation, the ark saved Noah, swept over the globe within the human period. We are told that it was not God's purpose to anticipate the natural course of discovery: as the story of the creation was written in human language, so the details of it may have been adapted to the existing state of human knowledge. The Bible it is said was not intended to teach men science, but to teach them what was necessary for the moral training of their souls. It may be that this is true. Spiritual grace affects the moral character of men, but leaves their intellect unimproved. The most religious men are as liable as atheists to ignorance of ordinary facts, and inspiration may be

only infallible when it touches on truths necessary to salvation. But if it be so, there are many things in the Bible which must become as uncertain as its geology or its astronomy. There is the long secular history of the Jewish people. Let it be once established that there is room for error anywhere, and we have no security for secular history. The inspiration of the Bible is the foundation of our whole belief; and it is a grave matter if we are uncertain to what extent it reaches, or how much and what it guarantees to us as true. We cannot live on probabilities. The faith in which we can live bravely and die in peace must be a certainty, so far as it professes to be a faith at all, or it is nothing. It may be that all intellectual efforts to arrive at it are in vain; that it is given to those to whom it is given, and withheld from those from whom it is withheld. It may be that the existing belief is undergoing a silent modification, like those to which the dispensations of religion have been successively subjected; or, again, it may be that to the creed as it is already established there is nothing to be added, and nothing any more to be taken from it. At this moment, however, the most vigorous minds appear least to see their way to a conclusion; and notwithstanding all the school and church building, the extended episcopate, and the religious newspapers, a general doubt is coming up like a thunderstorm against the wind, and blackening the sky. Those who cling most tenaciously to the faith in which they were educated yet confess themselves perplexed. They know what they believe; but why they believe it, or why they should require others to believe, they cannot tell or cannot agree. Between the authority of the Church and the authority of the Bible, the testimony of history and the testimony of the Spirit, the ascertained facts of science and the contradictory facts which seem to be revealed, the minds of men are tossed to and fro, harassed by the changed attitude in which scientific investigation has placed us all towards accounts of supernatural occurrences. We thrust the subject aside; we take refuge in practical work; we believe perhaps

that the situation is desperate and hopeless of improvement; we refuse to let the question be disturbed. But we cannot escape from our shadow, and the spirit of uncertainty will haunt the world like an uneasy ghost, till we take it by the throat like men.

We return then to the point from which we set out. The time is past for repression. Despotism has done its work; but the day of despotism is gone, and the only remedy is a full and fair investigation. Things will never right themselves if they are let alone. It is idle to say peace when there is no peace; and the concealed imposthume is more dangerous than an open wound. The law in this country has postponed our trial, but cannot save us from it; and the questions which have agitated the Continent are agitating us at last. The student who twenty years ago was contented with the Greek and Latin fathers and the Anglican divines, now reads Ewald and Renan. The Church authorities still refuse to look their difficulties in the face: they prescribe for mental troubles the established doses of Paley and Pearson; they refuse dangerous questions as sinful, and tread the round of commonplace in placid comfort. But it will not avail. Their pupils grow to manhood, and fight the battle for themselves, unaided by those who ought to have stood by them in their trial, and could not or would not; and the bitterness of those conflicts and the end of most of them in heart-broken uncertainty or careless indifference, is too notorious to all who care to know about such things.

We cannot afford year after year to be distracted with the tentative scepticism of essayists and reviewers. In a healthy condition of public opinion such a book as Bishop Colenso's would have passed unnoticed, or rather would never have been written, for the difficulties with which it deals would have been long ago met and disposed of. When questions rose in the early and middle ages of the Church, they were decided by councils of the wisest: those best able to judge met together, and compared their thoughts, and conclusions were arrived

at which individuals could accept and act upon. At the beginning of the English Reformation, when Protestant doctrine was struggling for reception, and the old belief was merging in the new, the country was deliberately held in formal suspense. Protestants and Catholics were set to preach on alternate Sundays in the same pulpit; the subject was discussed freely in the ears of the people, and at last, when all had been said on both sides, Convocation and Parliament embodied the result in formulas. Councils will no longer answer the purpose; the clergy have no longer a superiority of intellect or cultivation; and a conference of prelates from all parts of Christendom, or even from all departments of the English Church, would not present an edifying spectacle. Parliament may no longer meddle with opinions unless it be to untie the chains which it forged three centuries ago. But better than Councils, better than sermons, better than Parliament, is that free discussion through a free press which is the best instrument for the discovery of truth, and the most effectual means for preserving it.

We shall be told, perhaps, that we are beating the air, that the press is free, and that all men may and do write what they please. It is not so. Discussion is not free so long as the clergy who take any side but one are liable to be prosecuted and deprived of their means of living; it is not free so long as the expression of doubt is considered as a sin by public opinion and as a crime by the law. So far are we from free discussion that the world is not yet agreed that a free discussion is desirable; and till it be so agreed, the substantial intellect of the country will not throw itself into the question. The battle will continue to be fought by outsiders, who suffice to disturb a repose which they cannot restore; and that collective voice of the national understanding, which alone can give back to us a peaceful and assured conviction, will not be heard.

# SPINOZA

*Benedicti de Spinoza Tractatus de Deo et Homine ejusque Felicitate Lineamenta Atque Annotationes ad Tractatum Theologico Politicum.* Edidit et illustravit EDWARDUS BOEHMER. Halæ ad Salam. J. F. Lippert. 1852.

THIS little volume is one evidence among many of the interest which continues to be felt by the German students in Spinoza. The actual merit of the book itself is little or nothing; but it shows the industry with which they are gleaning among the libraries of Holland for any traces of him which they can recover; and the smallest fragments of his writings are acquiring that factitious importance which attaches to the most insignificant relics of acknowledged greatness. Such industry cannot be otherwise than laudable, but we do not think it at present altogether wisely directed. Nothing is likely to be brought to light which will much illustrate Spinoza's philosophy. He himself spent the better part of his life in working the language in which he expressed it clear of ambiguities; and such earlier draughts of his system as are supposed still to be extant in MS., and a specimen of which M. Boehmer believes himself to have discovered, contribute only obscurity to what is in no need of additional difficulty. Of Spinoza's private history, on the contrary, rich as it must have been, and abundant traces of it as must be extant somewhere in his own and his friends' correspondence, we know only enough to feel how vast a chasm remains to be filled. It is not often that any man in this world lives a life so well worth writing as Spinoza lived; not for striking incidents or large events

connected with it; but because (and no sympathy with his peculiar opinions disposes us to exaggerate his merit) he was one of the very best men whom these modern times have seen. Excommunicated, disinherited, and thrown upon the world when a mere boy to seek his livelihood, he resisted the inducements which on all sides were urged upon him to come forward in the world; refusing pensions, legacies, money in many forms, he maintained himself with grinding glasses for optical instruments, an art which he had been taught in early life, and in which he excelled the best workmen in Holland; and when he died, which was at the early age of forty-four, the affection with which he was regarded showed itself singularly in the endorsement of a tradesman's bill which was sent in to his executors, in which he was described as M. Spinoza of "blessed memory."

The account which remains of him we owe not to an admiring disciple, but to a clergyman, to whom his theories were detestable; and his biographer allows that the most malignant scrutiny had failed to detect a blemish in his character,—that except so far as his opinions were blameable, he had lived to all outward appearance free from fault. We desire, in what we are going to say of him, to avoid offensive collision with even popular prejudices, and still more with the earnest convictions of serious persons: our business is to relate what he was, and leave others to form their own conclusions. But one lesson there does seem to lie in such a life of such a man,—a lesson deeper than any which is to be found in his philosophy,—that wherever there is genuine and thorough love for good and goodness, no speculative superstructure of opinion can be so extravagant as to forfeit those graces which are promised not to clearness of intellect, but to purity of heart. In Spinoza's own beautiful language,—"justitia et caritas unicum et certissimum veræ fidei Catholicæ signum est, et veri Spiritûs sancti fructus: et ubicumque hæc reperiuntur, ibi Christus re verâ est, et ubicumque hæc desunt deest Christus. Solo namque Christi Spiritu duci

possumus in amorem justitiæ et caritatis." We may deny his conclusions; we may consider his system of thought preposterous and even pernicious, but we cannot refuse him the respect which is the right of all sincere and honourable men. We will say, indeed, as much as this, that wherever and on whatever questions good men are found ranged on opposite sides, one of three alternatives is always true:—either that the points of disagreement are purely speculative and of no moral importance, or that there is a misunderstanding of language, and the same thing is meant under difference of words, or else that the real truth is something different from what is held by any of the disputants, and that each is representing some important element which the other ignores or forgets. In either case, a certain calmness and good temper is necessary, if we would understand what we disagree with, or would oppose it with success. Spinoza's influence over European thought is too great to be denied or set aside, and if his doctrines be false in part, or false altogether, we cannot do their work more surely than by calumny or misrepresentation—a most obvious truism, which no one now living will deny in words, and which a century or two hence perhaps will begin to produce some effects upon the popular judgment.

Bearing it in mind, then, ourselves, as far as we are able, we propose to examine the Pantheistic philosophy in the first and only logical form which as yet it has assumed. Whatever may have been the case with his disciples, in the author of this system there was no unwillingness to look closely at it, or follow it out to its conclusions; and whatever other merits or demerits belong to Spinoza, at least he has done as much as with language can be done to make himself thoroughly understood—a merit in which it cannot be said that his followers have imitated him—Pantheism, as it is known in England, being a very synonym of vagueness and mysticism.

The fact is, that both in friend and enemy alike, there has been a reluctance to see Spinoza as he really

was. The Herder and Schleiermacher school have claimed him as a Christian—a position which no little disguise was necessary to make tenable; the orthodox Protestants and Catholics have called him an Atheist —which is still more extravagant; and even a man like Novalis, who, it might have been expected, would have had something reasonable to say, could find no better name for him than a *Gott trunkner Mann*—a God intoxicated man; an expression which has been quoted by everybody who has since written upon the subject, and which is about as inapplicable as those laboriously pregnant sayings usually are. With due allowance for exaggeration, such a name would describe tolerably the Transcendental mystics, a Toler, a Boehmen, or a Swedenborg; but with what justice can it be applied to the cautious, methodical Spinoza, who carried his thoughts about with him for twenty years, deliberately shaping them, and who gave them at last to the world in a form more severe than with such subjects had ever been so much as attempted? With him, as with all great men, there was no effort after sublime emotions. A plain, practical person, his object in philosophy was only to find a rule on which he could depend to govern his own actions and his own judgment: and his treatises contain no more than the conclusions at which he arrived in this purely personal search, and the grounds on which he rested them.

We cannot do better than follow his own account of himself as he has given it in the opening of his unfinished Tract, "De Emendatione Intellectûs." His language is very beautiful, but elaborate and full; and, as we have a long journey before us, we must be content to epitomize it.

Looking round him on his entrance into life, and asking himself what was his place and business in it, he turned for examples to his fellow-men, and found little that he could venture to imitate. Whatever they professed, they all really guided themselves by their different notions of what they thought desirable; and

these notions themselves resting on no more secure foundation than a vague, inconsistent experience, the experience of one not being the experience of another, men were all, so to say, rather playing experiments with life than living, and the larger portion of them miserably failing. Their mistakes arising, as it seemed to Spinoza, from inadequate knowledge, things which at one time looked desirable disappointing expectation when obtained, and the wiser course concealing itself often under an uninviting exterior, he desired to substitute certainty for conjecture, and to endeavour to find, by some surer method, where the real good of man lay. All this may sound very Pagan, and perhaps it is so. We must remember that he had been brought up a Jew, and had been driven out of the Jews' communion; his mind was therefore in contact with the bare facts of life, with no creed or system lying between them and himself as the interpreter of it. Some true account of things, however, he thought it likely that there must be, and the question was, how to find it. Of all forms of human thought, but one, he reflected, would admit of the certainty which he required—the mathematical; and, therefore, if certain knowledge were attainable at all, it must be looked for under the mathematical or demonstrative method; by tracing from ideas clearly conceived the consequences which were formally involved in them. The question was, therefore, of these ideas, these *veræ ideæ*, as he calls them,—what were they, and how were they to be obtained: if they were to serve as the axioms of his system, they must, he felt, be self-evident truths, of which no proof was required; and the illustration which he gives of the character of such ideas is ingenious and Platonic.

In order to produce any mechanical instrument, he says, we require others with which to manufacture it; and others again to manufacture those; and it would seem thus as if the process must be an infinite one, and as if nothing could ever be made at all. Nature, however, has provided for the difficulty in creating of her own accord certain rude instruments, with the help

of which we can make others better; and others again with the help of those. And so he thinks it must be with the mind, and there must be somewhere similar original instruments provided also as the first outfit of intellectual enterprise. To discover them, he examines the various senses in which men are said to know anything, and he finds that these senses resolve themselves into three, or, as he elsewhere divides it, four:—

We know a thing,

1. i. *Ex mero auditu:* because we have heard it from some person or persons whose veracity we have no reason to question.
   ii. *Ab experientiâ vagâ:* from general experience: for instance, all facts or phenomena which come to us through our senses as phenomena, but of the causes of which we are ignorant.
2. These two in Ethics are classed together.

As we have correctly conceived the laws of such phenomena, and see them following in their sequence in the order of nature.

3. *Ex scientiâ intuitivâ:* which alone is absolutely clear and certain.

To illustrate these divisions, suppose it be required to find a fourth proportional which shall stand to the third of three numbers as the second does to the first. The merchant's clerk knows his rule; he multiplies the second into the third and divides by the first. He neither knows nor cares to know why the result is the number which he seeks, but he has learnt the fact that it is so, and he remembers it.

A person a little wiser has tried the experiment in a variety of simple cases; he has discovered the rule by induction, but still does not understand it.

A third has mastered the laws of proportion mathematically, as he has found them in Euclid or other geometrical treatise.

A fourth with the plain numbers of 1, 2, and 3, sees for himself by simple intuitive force that 1 : 2 = 3 : 6.

Of these several kinds of knowledge the third and fourth alone deserve to be called knowledge, the others being no more than opinions more or less justly founded. The last is the only real insight, although the third, being exact in its form, may be depended upon as a basis of certainty. Under this last, as Spinoza allows, nothing except the very simplest truths *non nisi simplicissimæ veritates* can be perceived, but, such as they are, they are the foundation of all after science; and the true ideas, the *veræ ideæ*, which are apprehended by this faculty of intuition, are the primitive instruments with which nature has furnished us. If we ask for a test by which to distinguish them, he has none to give us. "Veritas," he says to his friends, in answer to their question, "veritas index sui est et falsi. Veritas se ipsam patefacit." These original truths are of such a kind that they cannot without absurdity even be conceived to be false; the opposites of them are contradictions in terms:—"Ut sciam me scire necessario debeo prius scire. Hinc patet quod certitudo nihil est præter ipsam essentiam objectivam. . . . Cum itaque veritas nullo egeat signo, sed sufficiat habere essentiam rerum objectivam, aut quod idem est ideas, ut omne tollatur dubium; hinc sequitur quod vera non est methodus, signum veritatis quærere post acquisitionem idearum; sed quod vera methodus est via, et ipsa veritas, aut essentiæ objectivæ rerum, aut ideæ (omnia illa idem significant) debito ordine quærantur." (*De Emend. Intell.*)

The opinion of this Review on reasonings of such a kind has been too often expressed to require us now to say how insecure they appear to us. When we remember the thousand conflicting opinions, the truth of which their several advocates have as little doubted as they have doubted their own existence, we require some better evidence than a mere feeling of certainty; and Aristotle's less pretending canon promises a safer road. Ὃ πᾶσι δοκεῖ, "what all men think," says Aristotle, τοῦτο εἶναι φάμεν, "this we say *is*,"—"and if you will not have this to be a fair ground of conviction, you will

scarcely find one which will serve you better." We are to see, however, what these *ideæ* are which Spinoza offers as self-evident. All will turn upon that; for, of course, if they are self-evident, if they do produce conviction, nothing more is to be said; but it does, indeed, appear strange to us that Spinoza was not staggered as to the validity of his canon, when his friends, every one of them, so floundered and stumbled among what he regarded as his simplest propositions, requiring endless *signa veritatis*, and unable for a long time even to understand their meaning, far less to "recognize them as elementary certainties." Modern readers may, perhaps, be more fortunate. We produce at length the definitions and axioms of the first book of the "Ethica," and they may judge for themselves:—

DEFINITIONS.

1. By a thing which is *causa sui*, its own cause, I mean a thing the essence of which involves the existence of it, or a thing which cannot be conceived of except as existing.

2. I call a thing finite, *suo genere*, when it can be circumscribed by another (or others) of the same nature, *e.g.* a given body is called finite, because we can always conceive another body larger than it; but body is not circumscribed by thought, nor thought by body.

3. By substance I mean what exists in itself and is conceived of by itself; the conception of which, that is, does not involve the conception of anything else as the cause of it.

4. By attribute I mean whatever the intellect perceives of substance as constituting the essence of substance.

5. Mode is an affection of substance, or is that which is in something else, by and through which it is conceived.

6. God is a being absolutely infinite; a substance consisting of infinite attributes, each of which expresses His eternal and infinite essence.

EXPLANATION.

I say *absolutely* infinite, not infinite *suo genere*, for of what is infinite *suo genere* only, the attributes are not infinite but finite; whereas what is infinite absolutely contains

in its own essence everything by which substance can be expressed and which involves no impossibility.

7. That thing is "free" which exists by the sole necessity of its own nature, and is determined in its operation by itself only. That is "not free" which is called into existence by something else, and is determined in its operation according to a fixed and definite method.

8. Eternity is existence itself, conceived as following necessarily and solely from the definition of the thing which is eternal.

EXPLANATION.

Because existence of this kind is conceived as an eternal verity, and, therefore, cannot be explained by duration, even though the duration be without beginning or end.

So far the definitions; then follow the

AXIOMS.

1. All things that exist, exist either of themselves or in virtue of something else.

2. What we cannot conceive of as existing in virtue of something else, we must conceive through and in itself.

3. From a given cause an effect necessarily follows, and if there be no given cause no effect can follow.

4. Things which have nothing in common with each other cannot be understood through one another; *i.e.* the conception of one does not involve the conception of the other.

5. To understand an effect implies that we understand the cause of it.

6. A true idea is one which corresponds with its *ideate*.

7. The essence of anything which can be conceived as non-existent does not involve existence.

Such is our metaphysical outfit of simple ideas with which to start upon our enterprise of learning, the larger number of which, so far from being simple, must be absolutely without meaning to persons whose minds are undisciplined in metaphysical abstraction, and which become only intelligible propositions as we look back upon them after having become acquainted with the system which they are supposed to contain.

Although, however, we may justly quarrel with such unlooked-for difficulties, the important question, after all, is not of their obscurity but of their truth. Many things in all the sciences are obscure to an unpractised understanding, which are true enough and clear enough to people acquainted with the subjects, and may be fairly laid as foundations of a scientific system, although rudimentary students must be contented to accept them upon faith. Of course it is entirely competent to Spinoza, or to any one, to define the terms which he intends to use just as he pleases, provided it be understood that any conclusions which he derives out of them apply only to the ideas so defined, and not to any supposed object existing which corresponds with them. Euclid defines his triangles and circles, and discovers that to figures so described certain properties previously unknown may be proved to belong; but as in nature there are no such things as triangles and circles exactly answering the definition, his conclusions, as applied to actually existing objects, are either not true at all or only proximately so. Whether it be possible to bridge over the gulf between existing things and the abstract conception of them, as Spinoza attempts to do, we shall presently see. It is a royal road to certainty if it be a practicable one, but we cannot say that we ever met any one who could say honestly Spinoza had convinced him; and power of demonstration, like all other powers, can be judged only by its effects. Does it prove? does it produce conviction? If not, it is nothing. We need not detain our readers among these abstractions. The real power of Spinozism does not lie so remote from ordinary appreciation, or we should long ago have heard the last of it. Like all other systems which have attracted followers, it addresses itself not to the logical intellect but to the imagination, which it affects to set aside. We refuse to submit to the demonstrations by which it thrusts itself upon our reception, but regarding it as a whole, as an attempt to explain the nature of the world, of which we are a part, we can still ask ourselves

how far the attempt is successful. Some account of these things we know that there must be, and the curiosity which asks the question regards itself, of course, as competent in some degree to judge of the answer to it. Before proceeding, however, to regard this philosophy in the aspect in which it is really powerful, we must clear our way through the fallacy of the method.

The system is evolved in a series of theorems in severely demonstrative order out of the definitions and axioms which we have translated. To propositions 1—6 we have nothing to object; they will not, probably, convey any very clear ideas, but they are so far purely abstract, and seem to follow (as far as we can speak of "following," in such subjects), by fair reasoning. "Substance is prior in nature to its affections." "Substances with different attributes have nothing in common," and therefore "one cannot be the cause of the other." "Things really distinct are distinguished by difference either of attribute or mode (there being nothing else by which they can be distinguished), and therefore, because things modally distinguished do not *quâ* substance differ from one another, there cannot be more than one substance of the same attribute; and therefore (let us remind our readers that we are among what Spinoza calls *notiones simplicissimas*), since there cannot be two substances of the same attribute, and substances of different attributes cannot be the cause one of the other, it follows that no substances can be produced by another substance."

The existence of substance, he then concludes, is involved in the nature of the thing itself. Substance exists. It does and must. We ask, why? and we are answered, because there is nothing capable of producing it, and therefore it is self-caused; *i.e.* by the first definition the essence of it implies existence as part of the idea. It is astonishing that Spinoza should not have seen that he assumes the fact that substance does exist in order to prove that it must. If it cannot be produced *and* exists, then, of course, it

exists in virtue of its own nature. But supposing it does not exist, supposing it is all a delusion, the proof falls to pieces, unless we fall back on the facts of experience, on the obscure and unscientific certainty that the thing which we call the world, and the personalities which we call ourselves, are a real substantial something. Conscious of the infirmity of his demonstration, he winds round it and round it, adding proof to proof, but never escaping the same vicious circle: substance exists because it exists, and the ultimate experience of existence, so far from being of that clear kind which can be accepted as an axiom, is the most confused of all our sensations. What is existence? and what is that something which we say exists? Things—essences—existences; these are but the vague names with which faculties, constructed only to deal with conditional phenomena, disguise their incapacity. The world in the Hindoo legend rested upon the back of the tortoise. It was a step between the world and nothingness, and served to cheat the imagination with ideas of a fictitious resting-place.

"If any one affirms," says Spinoza, "that he has a clear, distinct—that is to say, a true idea of substance, but that nevertheless he is uncertain whether any such substance exist, it is the same as if he were to affirm that he had a true idea, but yet was uncertain whether it was not false. Or if he says that substance can be created, it is like saying that a false idea can become a true idea—as absurd a thing as it is possible to conceive; and therefore the existence of substance, as well as the essence of it, must be acknowledged as an eternal verity."

It is again the same story. He speaks of a clear idea of substance; but he has not proved that such an idea is within the compass of the mind. A man's own notion that he sees clearly, is no proof that he really sees clearly; and the distinctness of a definition in itself is no evidence that it corresponds adequately with the object of it. No doubt a man who professes to have an idea of substance as an existing thing, cannot

doubt, as long as he has it, that substance so exists. It is merely to say that as long as a man is certain of this or that fact, he has no doubt of it. But neither his certainty nor Spinoza's will be of any use to a man who has no such idea, and who cannot recognize the lawfulness of the method by which it is arrived at.

From the self-existing substance it is a short step to the existence of God. After a few more propositions following one another with the same kind of coherence, we arrive successively at the conclusions that there is but one substance, that this substance being necessarily existent, it is also infinite, and that it is therefore identical with the Being who had been previously defined as the "Ens absolute perfectum," consisting of infinite "attributes, each of which expresses His eternal and infinite essence." Demonstrations of this kind were the characteristics of the period. Des Cartes had set the example of constructing them, and was followed by Cudworth, Clerke, Berkeley, and many others besides Spinoza. The inconclusiveness of their reasoning may perhaps be observed most readily in the strangely opposite conceptions formed by all these writers of the nature of that Being whose existence they nevertheless agreed, by the same method, to gather each out of their ideas. It is important, however, to examine it carefully, for it is the very key-stone of the Pantheistic system. As stated by Des Cartes, the argument stands something as follows:—God is an all-perfect Being,—perfection is the idea which we form of him: existence is a mode of perfection, and therefore God exists. The sophism we are told is only apparent; existence is part of the idea; it is as much involved in it, as the equality of all lines drawn from the centre to the circumference of a circle is involved in the idea of a circle, and a non-existent all-perfect Being is as inconceivable as a quadrilateral triangle. It is sometimes answered that in this way we may prove the existence of anything, —Titans, Chimæras, or the Olympian Gods; we have but to define them as existing, and the proof is complete. But in this objection there is really nothing of

weight; none of these beings are by hypothesis absolutely perfect, and, therefore, of their existence we can conclude nothing. With greater justice, however, we may say, that of such terms as perfection and existence we know too little to speculate in this way. Existence may be an imperfection for all we can tell; we know nothing about the matter. Such arguments are but endless *petitiones principii*, like the self-devouring serpent resolving themselves into nothing. We wander round and round them, in the hope of finding some tangible point at which we can seize their meaning; but we are presented everywhere with the same impracticable surface, from which our grasp glides off ineffectual.

The idea, however, lying at the bottom of the conviction, which obviously Spinoza felt upon the matter, is stated with sufficient distinctness in one of his letters. "Nothing is more clear," he writes to his pupil De Vries, "than that, on the one hand, everything which exists is conceived by or under some attribute or other; that the more reality, therefore, a being or thing has, the more attributes must be assigned to it;" "and conversely," (and this he calls his *argumentum palmarium* in proof of the existence of God,) "*the more attributes I assign to a thing, the more I am forced to conceive it as existing.*" Arrange the argument how we please, we shall never get it into a form clearer than this:—The more perfect a thing is, the more it must exist (as if existence could admit of more or less); and therefore the all-perfect Being must exist absolutely. There is no flaw, we are told, in the reasoning; and if we are not convinced, it is solely from the confused habits of our own minds.

It may seem to some persons that all arguments are good when on the right side, and that it is a gratuitous impertinence to quarrel with the proofs of a conclusion which it is so desirable that all should receive. As yet, however, we are but inadequately acquainted with the idea attached by Spinoza to the word perfection, and if we commit ourselves to this logic, it may lead us out to some unexpected consequences. Obviously all such

reasonings presume, as a first condition, that we men possess faculties capable of dealing with absolute ideas; that we can understand the nature of things external to ourselves as they really *are* in their absolute relation to one another, independent of our own conception. The question immediately before us is one which can never be determined. The truth which is to be proved is one which we already believe; and if, as we believe also, our conviction of God's existence is, like that of our own existence, intuitive and immediate, the grounds of it can never adequately be analysed; we cannot say exactly what they are, and therefore we cannot say what they are not; whatever we receive intuitively, we receive without proof; and stated as a naked proposition, it must involve necessarily a *petitio principii*. We have a right, however, to object at once to an argument in which the conclusion is more obvious than the premises; and if it lead on to other consequences which we disapprove in themselves, we reject it without difficulty or hesitation. We ourselves believe that God is, because we experience the control of a "power" which is stronger than we; and our instincts teach us so much of the nature of that power as our own relation to it requires us to know. God is the being to whom our obedience is due; and the perfections which we attribute to Him are those moral perfections which are the proper object of our reverence. Strange to say, the perfections of Spinoza, which appear so clear to him, are without any moral character whatever; and for men to speak of the justice of God, he tells us, is but to see in Him a reflection of themselves; as if a triangle were to conceive of Him as *eminenter triangularis*, or a circle to give Him the property of circularity.

Having arrived, however, at existence, we soon find ourselves among ideas, which at least are intelligible, if the character of them is as far removed as before from the circle of ordinary thought. Nothing exists except substance, the attributes under which substance is expressed, and the modes or affections of those attributes. There is but one substance self-existent, eternal, neces-

sary, and that is the absolutely Infinite all-perfect Being. Substance cannot produce substance; and, therefore, there is no such thing as creation, and everything which exists, is either an attribute of Him, or an affection of some attribute of Him, modified in this manner or in that. Beyond Him there is nothing, and nothing like Him or equal to Him; He therefore alone in Himself is absolutely free, uninfluenced by anything, for nothing is except Himself; and from Him and from His supreme power, essence, intelligence (for all these words mean the same thing) all things have necessarily flowed, and will and must flow on for ever, in the same manner as from the nature of a triangle it follows, and has followed, and will follow from eternity to eternity, that the angles of it are equal to two right angles. It would seem as if the analogy were but an artificial play upon words, and that it was only metaphorically that in mathematical demonstration we speak of one thing as following from another. The properties of a curve or a triangle are what they are at all times, and the sequence is merely in the order in which they are successively known to ourselves. But according to Spinoza, this is the only true sequence; and what we call the universe, and all the series of incidents upon it, are involved formally and mathematically in the definition of God.

Each attribute is infinite *suo genere;* and it is time that we should know distinctly the meaning which Spinoza attaches to that important word. Out of the infinite number of the attributes of God two only are known to us—"extension," and "thought," or "mind." Duration, even though it be without beginning or end, is not an attribute; it is not even a real thing. It has no relation to being conceived mathematically, in the same way as it would be absurd to speak of circles or triangles as any older to-day than they were at the beginning of the world. These and everything of the same kind are conceived, as Spinoza rightly says, *sub quâdam specie æternitatis.* But extension, or substance extended, and thought, or substance perceiving, are real, absolute, and objective. We must not confound exten-

sion with body, for though body be a mode of extension, there is extension which is not body, and it is infinite because we cannot conceive it to be limited except by itself—or, in other words, to be limited at all. And as it is with extension, so it is with mind, which is also infinite with the infinity of its object. Thus there is no such thing as creation, and no beginning or end. All things of which our faculties are cognizant under one or other of these attributes are produced from God, and in Him they have their being, and without Him they would cease to be.

Proceeding by steps of rigid demonstration in this strange logic, (and most admirably indeed is the form of the philosophy adapted to the spirit of it,) we learn that God is the only *causa libera;* that no other thing or being has any power of self-determination: all move by fixed laws of causation, motive upon motive, act upon act; there is no free will, and no contingency; and however necessary it may be for our incapacity to consider future things as in a sense contingent (see *Tractat. Theol. Polit.* cap. iv. sec. 4), this is but one of the thousand convenient deceptions which we are obliged to employ with ourselves. God is the *causa immanens omnium;* He is not a personal being existing apart from the universe; but Himself in His own reality, He is expressed in the universe, which is His living garment. Keeping to the philosophical language of the term, Spinoza preserves the distinction between *natura naturans* and *natura naturata.* The first is being in itself, the attributes of substance as they are conceived simply and alone; the second is the infinite series of modifications which follow out of the properties of these attributes. And thus all which *is*, is what it is by an absolute necessity, and could not have been other than it is. God is free, because no causes external to Himself have power over Him; and as good men are most free when most a law to themselves, so it is no infringement on God's freedom to say that He *must* have acted as He has acted, but rather He is absolutely free because absolutely a law Himself to Himself.

Here ends the first book of the Ethics, the book which contains, as we said, the *notiones simplicissimas*, and the primary and rudimental deductions from them. *His Dei naturam*, Spinoza says in his lofty confidence, *ejusque proprietates explicui.* But as if conscious that his method will never convince, he concludes this portion of his subject with an analytical appendix; not to explain or apologize, but to show us clearly, in practical detail, the position into which he has led us. The root, we are told, of all philosophical errors, lies in our notion of final causes; we invert the order of nature, and interpret God's action through our own; we speak of His intentions, as if he were a man; we assume that we are capable of measuring them, and finally erect ourselves, and our own interests, into the centre and criterion of all things. Hence arises our notion of evil. If the universe be what this philosophy has described it, the perfection which it assigns to God is extended to everything, and evil is of course impossible; there is no shortcoming either in nature or in man; each person and each thing is exactly what it has the power to be, and nothing more. But men imagining that all things exist on their account, and perceiving their own interests, bodily and spiritual, capable of being variously affected, have conceived these opposite influences to result from opposite and contradictory powers, and call what contributes to their advantage good, and whatever obstructs it evil. For our convenience we form generic conceptions of human excellence, as archetypes after which to strive, and such of us as approach nearest to such archetypes are supposed to be virtuous, and those who are most remote from them to be wicked. But such generic abstractions are but *entia imaginationis*, and have no real existence. In the eyes of God each thing is what it has the means of being. There is no rebellion against Him, and no resistance of His will; in truth, therefore, there neither is nor can be such a thing as a bad action in the common sense of the word. Actions are good or bad, not in themselves, but as compared with the nature of the agent; what we censure in men,

we tolerate and even admire in animals, and as soon as we are aware of our mistake in assigning to the former a power of free volition, our notion of evil as a positive thing will cease to exist.

"If I am asked," concludes Spinoza, "why then all mankind were not created by God, so as to be governed solely by reason? it was because, I reply, there was to Him no lack of matter to create all things from the highest to the lowest grade of perfection; or, to speak more properly, because the laws of His nature were ample enough to suffice for the production of all things which can be conceived by an Infinite Intelligence."

It is possible that readers who have followed us so far will now turn away with no disposition to learn more philosophy which issues in such conclusions; and resentful perhaps that it should have been ever laid before them at all, in language so little expressive of aversion and displeasure. We must claim however, in Spinoza's name, the right which he claims for himself. His system must be judged as a whole; and whatever we may think ourselves would be the moral effect of it if it were generally received, in his hands and in his heart it is worked into maxims of the purest and loftiest morality. And at least we are bound to remember that some account of this great mystery of evil there must be; and although familiarity with commonly-received explanations may disguise from us the difficulties with which they too, as well as that of Spinoza, are embarrassed, such difficulties none the less exist; the fact is the grand perplexity, and for ourselves we acknowledge that of all theories about it Spinoza's would appear to us the least irrational, if our conscience did not forbid us to listen to it. The objections, with the replies to them, are well drawn out in the correspondence with William de Blyenburg; and it will be seen from this with how little justice the denial of evil as a positive thing can be called equivalent to denying it relatively to man, or to confusing the moral distinctions between virtue and vice.

"We speak," writes Spinoza, in answer to Blyenburg, who had urged something of the kind, "we speak of this

or that man having done a wrong thing, when we compare him with a general standard of humanity; but inasmuch as God neither perceives things in such abstract manner, nor forms to himself such kind of generic definitions, and since there is no more reality in anything than God has assigned to it, it follows, surely, that the absence of good exists only in respect of man's understanding, not in respect of God's."

"If this be so," then replies Blyenburg, "bad men fulfil God's will as well as good."

"It is true," Spinoza answers, "they fulfil it, yet not as the good nor as well as the good, nor are they to be compared with them. The better a thing or a person be, the more there is in him of God's spirit, and the more he expresses God's will; while the bad, being without that divine love which arises from the knowledge of God, and through which alone we are called (in respect of our understandings) his servants, are but as instruments in the hand of the artificer, —they serve unconsciously, and are consumed in their service."

Spinoza, after all, is but stating in philosophical language the extreme doctrine of Grace; and St. Paul, if we interpret his real belief by the one passage so often quoted, in which he compares us to "clay in the hands of the potter, who maketh one vessel to honour and another to dishonour," may be accused with justice of having held the same opinion. If Calvinism be pressed to its logical consequences, it either becomes an intolerable falsehood, or it resolves itself into the philosophy of Spinoza. It is monstrous to call evil a positive thing, and to assert that God has predetermined it,—to tell us that he has ordained what he hates, and hates what he has ordained. It is incredible that we should be without power to obey him except through his free grace, and yet be held responsible for our failures when that grace has been withheld. And it is idle to call a philosopher sacrilegious who has but systematized the faith which so many believe, and cleared it of its most hideous features.

At all events, Spinoza flinches from nothing, and disguises no conclusions either from himself or from his readers. We believe that logic has no busi-

ness with such questions; that the answer to them lies in the conscience and not in the intellect,—that it is practical merely, and not speculative. Spinoza thinks otherwise; and he is at least true to the guide which he has chosen. Blyenburg presses him with instances of horrid crime, such as bring home to the heart the natural horror of it. He speaks of Nero's murder of Agrippina, and asks if God can be called the cause of such an act as that.

"God," replies Spinoza, calmly, "is the cause of all things which have reality. If you can show that evil, errors, crimes express any real things, I agree readily that God is the cause of them; but I conceive myself to have proved that what constitutes the essence of evil is not a real thing at all, and therefore that God cannot be the cause of it. Nero's matricide was not a crime, in so far as it was a positive outward act. Orestes also killed his mother; and we do not judge Orestes as we judge Nero. The crime of the latter lay in his being without pity, without obedience, without natural affection,—none of which things express any positive essence, but the absence of it: and therefore God was not the cause of these, although he was the cause of the act and the intention.

"But once for all," he adds, "this aspect of things will remain intolerable and unintelligible as long as the common notions of free will remain unimproved."

And of course, and we shall all confess it, if these notions are as false as he supposes them, and we have no power to be anything but what we are, there neither is nor can be such a thing as moral evil; and what we call crimes will no more involve a violation of the will of God, they will no more impair his moral attributes if we suppose him to have willed them, than the same actions, whether of lust, ferocity, or cruelty, in the inferior animals. There will be but, as Spinoza says, an infinite gradation in created things, the poorest life being more than none, the meanest active disposition something better than inertia, and the smallest exercise of reason better than mere ferocity. Moral evil need not disturb us, if—if we can be nothing but what we are, if we are but as clay.

The moral aspect of the matter will be more clear as we proceed. We pause, however, to notice one difficulty of a metaphysical kind, which is best disposed of in passing. Whatever obscurity may lie about the thing which we call Time (philosophers not being able to agree what it is, or whether properly it *is* anything), the words past, present, future do undoubtedly convey some definite idea with them: things will be which are not yet, and have been which are no longer. Now if everything which exists be a necessary mathematical consequence from the nature or definition of the One Being, we cannot see how there can be any time but the present, or how past and future have room for a meaning. God is, and therefore all properties of him *are*, just as every property of a circle exists in it as soon as the circle exists. We may if we like, for convenience, throw our theorems into the future, and say, *e.g.* that if two lines in a circle cut each other, the rectangle under the parts of the one *will* equal that under the parts of the other. But we only mean in reality that these rectangles *are* equal; and the *future* relates only to our knowledge of the fact. Allowing, however, as much as we please, that the condition of England a hundred years hence lies already in embryo in existing causes, it is a paradox to say that such condition exists already in the sense in which the properties of the circle exist; and yet Spinoza insists on the illustration.

It is singular that he should not have noticed the difficulty; not that either it or the answer to it (which no doubt would have been ready enough) are likely to interest any person except metaphysicians, a class of thinkers, happily, which is rapidly diminishing.

We proceed to more important matters—to Spinoza's detailed theory of Nature chiefly as exhibited in man and in man's mind, a theory which for its bold ingenuity is the most remarkable which on this dark subject has ever been proposed. Whether we can believe it or not, is another question; yet undoubtedly it provides an answer for every difficulty; it accepts with equal

welcome the extremes of materialism and of spiritualism: and if it be the test of the soundness of a philosophy that it will explain phenomena and reconcile difficulties, it is hard to account for the fact that a system which bears such a test so admirably, should nevertheless be so incredible as it is.

Most people have heard of the "Harmonie Pré-établie" of Leibnitz; it is borrowed without acknowledgment from Spinoza, and adapted to the Leibnitzian system. "Man," says Leibnitz, "is composed of mind and body; but what is mind and what is body, and what is the nature of their union? Substances so opposite in kind, it is impossible to suppose can affect one another; mind cannot act on matter, or matter upon mind; and the appearance of such mutual action of them on each other is an appearance only and a delusion." A delusion so general, however, required to be accounted for; and Leibnitz accounted for it by supposing that God in creating a world, composed of material and spiritual phenomena, ordained from the beginning that these several phenomena should proceed in parallel lines side by side in a constantly corresponding harmony. The sense of seeing results, it appears to us, from the formation of a picture upon the retina. The motion of the arm or the leg appears to result from an act of will; but in either case we mistake coincidence for causation. Between substances so wholly alien there can be no intercommunion; and we only suppose that the object seen produces the idea, and that the desire produces the movement, because the phenomena of matter and the phenomena of spirit are so contrived as to flow always in the same order and sequence. This hypothesis, as coming from Leibnitz, has been, if not accepted, at least listened to respectfully; because while taking it out of its proper place, he contrived to graft it upon Christianity; and succeeded, with a sort of speculative legerdemain, in making it appear to be in harmony with revealed religion. Disguised as a philosophy of Predestination, and connected with the Christian doctrine of Retribution, it steps forward with an air of un-

conscious innocence, as if interfering with nothing which Christians generally believe. And yet, leaving as it does no larger scope for liberty or responsibility than when in the hands of Spinoza,[1] Leibnitz, in our

[1] Since these words were written a book[1] has appeared in Paris by an able disciple of Leibnitz, which, although it does not lead us to modify the opinion expressed in them, yet obliges us to give our reasons for speaking as we do. M. de Careil has discovered in the library at Hanover a MS. in the handwriting of Leibnitz, containing a series of remarks on the book of a certain John Wachter. It does not appear who this John Wachter was, nor by what accident he came to have so distinguished a critic. If we may judge by the extracts at present before us, he seems to have been an absurd and extravagant person, who had attempted to combine the theology of the Cabbala with the very little which he was able to understand of the philosophy of Spinoza; and, as far as he is concerned, neither his writings nor the reflections upon them are of interest to any human being. The extravagance of Spinoza's followers, however, furnished Leibnitz with an opportunity of noticing the points on which he most disapproved of Spinoza himself; and these few notices M. de Careil has now for the first time published as "The Refutation of Spinoza, by Leibnitz." They are exceedingly brief and scanty; and the writer of them would assuredly have hesitated to describe an imperfect criticism by so ambitious a title. The modern editor, however, must be allowed the privilege of a worshipper, and we will not quarrel with him for an exaggerated estimate of what his master had accomplished. We are indebted to his enthusiasm for what is at least a curious discovery, and we will not qualify the gratitude which he has earned by industry and good will. At the same time, the notes themselves confirm the opinion which we have always entertained, that Leibnitz did not understand Spinoza. Leibnitz did not understand him, and the followers of Leibnitz do not understand him now. If he were no more than what he is described in the book before us,— if his metaphysics were "miserable," if his philosophy was absurd, and he himself nothing more than a second-rate disciple of Descartes,—we can assure M. de Careil that we should long ago have heard the last of him.

There must be something else, something very different from this, to explain the position which he holds in Germany, or the fascination which his writings exerted over such minds as those of Lessing or of Goethe; and the fact of so enduring an influence is more than a sufficient answer to mere depreciating criticism. This, however, is not a point which there is any use in pressing. Our

[1] *Réfutation Inédite de Spinoza.* Par Leibnitz. *Précédée d'une Memoire,* par Foucher de Careil. Paris. 1854.

opinion, has only succeeded in making it infinitely more revolting. Spinoza could not regard the bad man as an object of Divine anger and a subject of retributory punishment. He was not a Christian, and made no pretension to be considered such; and it did not occur to him to regard the actions of a being which, both with Leibnitz and himself, is (to use his own expression)

present business is to justify the two assertions which we have made. First, that Leibnitz conceived his "Theory of the Harmonie Pré-établie" from Spinoza, without acknowledgment; and, secondly, that this theory is quite as inconsistent with religion as is that of Spinoza, and only differs from it in disguising its real character.

First for the "Harmonie Pré-établie." Spinoza's "Ethics" appeared in 1677; and we know that they were read by Leibnitz. In 1696, Leibnitz announced as a discovery of his own, a Theory of "The Communication of Substances," which he illustrates in the following manner:—

"Vous ne comprenez pas, dites-vous, comment je pourrois prouver ce que j'ai avancé touchant la communication, ou l'harmonie de deux substances aussi différentes que l'âme et le corps? Il est vrai que je crois en avoir trouvé le moyen; et voici comment je prétends vous satisfaire. Figurez-vous deux horologes ou montres qui s'accordent parfaitement. Or cela se peut faire de trois manières. La 1e consiste dans une influence mutuelle. La 2e est d'y attacher un ouvrier habile qui les redresse, et les mette d'accord à tous moments. La 3e est de fabriquer ces deux pendules avec tant d'art et de justesse, qu'on se puisse assurer de leur accord dans la suite. Mettez maintenant l'âme et le corps à la place de ces deux pendules; leur accord peut arriver par l'une de ces trois manières. La voye d'influence est celle de la philosophie vulgaire; mais comme l'on ne sauroit concevoir des particules matérielles qui puissent passer d'une de ces substances dans l'autre, il faut abandonner ce sentiment. La voye de l'assistance continuelle du Créateur est celle du système des causes occasionnelles; mais je tiens que c'est faire intervenir Deus ex machinâ dans une chose naturelle et ordinaire, où selon la raison il ne doit concourir, que de la manière qu'il concourt à toutes les autres choses naturelles. Ainsi il ne reste que mon hypothèse; c'est-à-dire que la voye de l'harmonie. Dieu a fait dès le commencement chacune de ces deux substances de telle nature, qu'en ne suivant que ces propres loix qu'elle a reçues avec son être, elle s'accorde pourtant avec l'autre tout comme s'il y avoit une influence mutuelle, ou comme si Dieu y mettoit toujours la main au de-là de son concours général. Après cela je n'ai pas besoin de rien prouver à moins qu'on ne veuille exiger que je prouve que Dieu est assez habile pour se servir

an *automaton spirituale*, as deserving a fiery indignation and everlasting vengeance.

"Deus," according to Spinoza's definition, "est ens constans infinitis attributis quorum unumquodque æternam et infinitam essentiam exprimit." Under each of these attributes *infinita sequuntur*, and everything which an infinite intelligence can conceive, and an infinite

de cette artifice," &c.—*Leibnitz Opera*, p. 133. Berlin edition, 1840.

Leibnitz, as we have said, attempts to reconcile his system with Christianity, and therefore, of course, this theory of the relation of mind and body wears a very different aspect under his treatment from what it wears under that of Spinoza. But Spinoza and Leibnitz both agree in this one peculiar conception in which they differ from all other philosophers before or after them—that mind and body have no direct communication with each other, and that the phenomena of them merely correspond. M. de Careil says they both borrowed it from Descartes; but that is impossible. Descartes held no such opinion, it was the precise point of disagreement at which Spinoza parted from him; and therefore, since in point of date Spinoza had the advantage of Leibnitz, and we know that Leibnitz was acquainted with his writings, we must either suppose that he was directly indebted to Spinoza for an obligation which he ought to have acknowledged, or else, which is extremely improbable, that having read Spinoza and forgotten him, he afterwards reoriginated for himself one of the most singular and peculiar notions which was ever offered to the belief of mankind.

So much for the first point, which, after all, is but of little moment. It is more important to ascertain whether, in the hands of Leibnitz, this theory can be any better reconciled with what is commonly meant by religion; whether, that is, the ideas of obedience and disobedience, merit and demerit, judgment and retribution, have any proper place under it. Spinoza makes no pretension to anything of the kind, and openly declares that these ideas are ideas merely, and human mistakes. Leibnitz, in opposition to him, endeavours to re-establish them in the following manner. It is true he conceives that the system of the universe has been arranged and predetermined from the moment at which it was launched into being; from the moment at which God selected it, with all its details, as the best which could exist; but it is carried on by the action of individual creatures (monads as he calls them) which, though necessarily obeying the laws of their existence, yet obey them with a "character of spontaneity," which although "automata," are yet voluntary agents; and therefore, by the consent of their hearts to their actions, entitle themselves to moral praise or moral censure. The question is, whether by the mere assertion of the co-existence of these opposite qualities in the

power can produce,—everything which follows as a possibility out of the divine nature,—all things which have been, and are, and will be,—find expression and actual existence, not under one attribute only, but under each and every attribute. Language is so ill adapted to such a system, that even to state it accurately is all but impossible, and analogies can

monad man, he has proved that such qualities can coexist. In our opinion, it is like speaking of a circular ellipse, or of a quadrilateral triangle. There is a plain dilemma in these matters from which no philosophy can extricate itself. If men can incur guilt, their actions might be other than they are. If they cannot act otherwise than they do, they cannot incur guilt. So at least it appears to us; yet, in the darkness of our knowledge, we would not complain merely of a theory, and if our earthly life were all in all, and the grave remained the extreme horizon of our hopes and fears, the "Harmonie Pré-établie," might be tolerated as credible, and admired as ingenious and beautiful. It is when forcibly attached to a creed of the future, with which it has no natural connection, that it assumes its repulsive features. The world may be in the main good; while the good, from the unknown condition of its existence, may be impossible without some intermixture of evil; and although Leibnitz was at times staggered even himself by the misery and wickedness which he witnessed, and was driven to comfort himself with the reflection that this earth might be but one world in the midst of the universe, and perhaps the single chequered exception in an infinity of stainless globes, yet we would not quarrel with a hypothesis because it was imperfect; it might pass as a possible conjecture on a dark subject, when nothing better than conjecture was attainable.

But as soon as we are told that the evil in these "automata" of mankind, being, as it is, a necessary condition of this world which God has called into being, is yet infinitely detestable to God; that the creatures who suffer under the accursed necessity of committing sin are infinitely guilty in God's eyes, for doing what they have no power to avoid, and may therefore be justly punished in everlasting fire; our hearts recoil against the paradox.

No disciple of Leibnitz will maintain, that unless he had found this belief in an eternity of penal retribution an article of the popular creed, such a doctrine would have formed a natural appendage of his system; and if M. de Careil desires to know why the influence of Spinoza, whose genius he considers so insignificant, has been so deep and so enduring, while Leibnitz has only secured for himself a mere admiration of his talents, it is because Spinoza was not afraid to be consistent, even at the price of the world's reprobation, and refused to purchase the applause of his own age at the sacrifice of the singleness of his heart.

only remotely suggest what such expressions mean. But it is as if it were said that the same thought might be expressed in an infinite variety of languages; and not in words only, but in action, in painting, in sculpture, in music, in any form of any kind which can be employed as a means of spiritual embodiment. Of all these infinite attributes two only, as we said, are known to us,—extension and thought. Material phenomena are phenomena of extension; and to every modification of extension an idea corresponds under the attribute of thought. Out of such a compound as this is formed man, composed of body and mind; two parallel and correspondent modifications eternally answering one another. And not man only, but all other beings and things are similarly formed and similarly animated; the anima or mind of each varying according to the complicity of the organism of its material counterpart. Although body does not think, nor affect the mind's power of thinking; and mind does not control body, nor communicate to it either motion or rest or any influence from itself, yet body with all its properties is the object or ideate of mind; whatsoever body does mind perceives, and the greater the energizing power of the first, the greater the perceiving power of the second. And this is not because they are adapted one to the other by some inconceivable preordinating power, but because mind and body are *una et eadem res*, the one absolute being affected in one and the same manner, but expressed under several attributes; the modes and affections of each attribute having that being for their cause, as he exists under that attribute of which they are modes and no other; idea being caused by idea, and body affected by body; the image on the retina being produced by the object reflected upon it, the idea or image in our minds by the idea of that object, &c. &c.

A solution so remote from all ordinary ways of thinking on these matters is so difficult to grasp, that one can hardly speak of it as being probable, or as being improbable. Probability extends only to what we can imagine as possible, and Spinoza's theory seems

to lie beyond the range within which our judgment can exercise itself; in our own opinion, indeed, as we have already said, the entire subject is one with which we have no business; and the explanation of it, if it is ever to be explained to us, is reserved till we are in some other state of existence. We do not disbelieve Spinoza because what he suggests is in itself incredible. The chances may be millions to one against his being right, yet the real truth, if we knew it, would be probably at least as strange as his conception of it. But we are firmly convinced that of these questions, and all like them, practical answers only lie within the reach of human faculties; and that in all such "researches into the absolute" we are on the road which ends nowhere.

Among the difficulties, however, most properly akin to this philosophy itself, there is one most obvious, viz., that if the attributes of God be infinite, and each particular thing is expressed under them all, then mind and body express but an infinitesimal portion of the nature of each of ourselves; and this human nature exists (*i.e.*, there exists corresponding modes of substance) in the whole infinity of the divine nature under attributes differing each from each, and all from mind and all from body. That this must be so, follows obviously from the definition of the Infinite Being, and the nature of the distinction between the two attributes which are known to us; and if this be so, why does not the mind perceive something of all these other attributes? The objection is well expressed by a correspondent (Letter 67): — "It follows from what you say," he writes to Spinoza, "that the modification which constitutes my mind, and that which constitutes my body, although it be one and the same modification, yet must be expressed in an infinity of ways; one way by thought, a second way by extension, a third by some attribute unknown to me, and so on to infinity; the attributes being infinite in number, and the order and connection of modes being the same in them all; why, then, does the mind perceive the modes of but one attribute only?"

Spinoza's answer is curious: unhappily a fragment of his letter only is extant, so that it is too brief to be satisfactory.

"In reply to your difficulty," he says, "although each particular thing be truly in the Infinite mind, conceived in Infinite modes, the Infinite idea answering to all these cannot constitute one and the same mind of any single being, but must constitute Infinite minds. No one of all these Infinite ideas has any connection with another."

He means, we suppose, that God's mind only perceives, or can perceive, things under their Infinite expression, and that the idea of each several mode, under whatever attribute, constitutes a separate mind.

We do not know that we can add anything to this explanation; the difficulty lies in the audacious sweep of the speculation itself; we will however attempt an illustration, although we fear it will be to illustrate *obscurum per obscurius*. Let A B C D be four out of the Infinite number of the Divine attributes. A the attribute of mind; B the attribute of extension; C and D other attributes, the nature of which is not known to us. Now A, as the attribute of mind, is that which perceives all which takes place under B C and D, but it is only as it exists in God that it forms the universal consciousness of all attributes at once. In its modifications it is combined separately with the modifications of each, constituting in combination with the modes of each attribute a separate being. As forming the mind of B, A perceives what takes place in B, but not what takes place in C or D. Combined with B, it forms the soul of the human body, and generally the soul of all modifications of extended substance; combined with C, it forms the soul of some other analogous being; combined with D, again of another; but the combinations are only in pairs, in which A is constant. A and B make one being, A and C another, A and D a third; but B will not combine with C, nor C with D; each attribute being, as it were, conscious only of itself.

And therefore, although to those modifications of mind and extension which we call ourselves there are corresponding modifications under C and D, and generally under each of the Infinite attributes of God; each of ourselves being in a sense Infinite, nevertheless we neither have nor can have any knowledge of ourselves in this Infinite aspect; our actual consciousness being limited to the phenomena of sensible experience.

English readers, however, are likely to care little for all this; they will look to the general theory, and judge of it as its aspect affects them. And first, perhaps, they will be tempted to throw aside as absurd the notion that their bodies go through the many operations which they experience them to do, undirected by their minds; it is a thing they may say at once preposterous and incredible. And no doubt on the first blush it sounds absurd, and yet, on second thoughts, it is less so than it seems; and though we could not persuade ourselves to believe it, absurd in the sense of having nothing to be said for it, it certainly is not. It is far easier, for instance, to imagine the human body capable by its own virtue, and by the laws of material organisation, of building a house, than of *thinking;* and yet men are allowed to say that the body thinks, without being regarded as candidates for a lunatic asylum. We see the seed shoot up into stem and leaf and throw out flowers; we observe it fulfilling processes of chemistry more subtle than were ever executed in Liebig's laboratory, and producing structures more cunning than man can imitate. The bird builds her nest, the spider shapes out its delicate web and stretches it in the path of his prey; directed not by calculating thought, as we conceive ourselves to be, but by some motive influence, our ignorance of the nature of which we disguise from ourselves, and call it instinct, but which we believe at least to be some property residing in the organisation; and we are not to suppose that the human body, the most complex of all material structures, has slighter powers

in it than the bodies of a seed, a bird, or an insect. Let us listen to Spinoza himself:—

"There can be no doubt," he says, "that this hypothesis is true, but unless I can prove it from experience, men will not, I fear, be induced even to reflect upon it calmly, so persuaded are they that it is by the mind only that their bodies are set in motion. And yet what body can or cannot do no one has yet determined; body, *i.e.*, by the law of its own nature, and without assistance from mind. No one has so probed the human frame as to have detected all its functions and exhausted the list of them: and there are powers exhibited by animals far exceeding human sagacity; and again, feats are performed by somnambulists on which in the waking state the same persons would never venture —itself a proof that body is able to accomplish what mind can only admire. Men *say* that mind moves body, but how it moves it they cannot tell, or what degree of motion it can impart to it; so that, in fact, they do not know what they say, and are only confessing their own ignorance in specious language. They will answer me, that whether or not they understand how it can be, yet that they are assured by plain experience that unless mind could perceive, body would be altogether inactive; they know that it depends on the mind whether the tongue speak or not. But do they not equally experience that if their bodies are paralysed their minds cannot think? That if their bodies are asleep their minds are without power? That their minds are not at all times equally able to exert themselves even on the same subject, but depend on the state of their bodies? And as for experience proving that the members of the body can be controlled by the mind, I fear experience proves very much the reverse. But it is absurd, they rejoin, to attempt to explain from the mere laws of body such things as pictures, or palaces, or works of art; the body could not build a church unless mind directed it. I have shown, however, that we do not yet know what body can or cannot do, or what would naturally follow from the structure of it; that we experience in the feats of somnambulists something which antecedently to that experience would have seemed incredible. This fabric of the human body exceeds infinitely any contrivance of human skill, and an infinity of things, as I have already proved, ought to follow from it."

We are not concerned to answer this reasoning, although if the matter were one the debating of which

could be of any profit, it would undoubtedly have its weight, and would require to be patiently considered. Life is too serious, however, to be wasted with impunity over speculations in which certainty is impossible, and in which we are trifling with what is inscrutable.

Objections of a far graver kind were anticipated by Spinoza himself, when he went on to gather out of his philosophy "that the mind of man being part of the Infinite intelligence, when we say that such a mind perceives this thing or that, we are, in fact, saying that God perceives it, not that he is Infinite, but as he is represented by the nature of this or that idea; and similarly, when we say that a man does this or that action, we say that God does it not *quâ* he is Infinite, but *quâ* he is expressed in that man's nature." "Here," he says, "many readers will no doubt hesitate, and many difficulties will occur to them in the way of such a supposition." Undoubtedly there was reason enough to form such an anticipation. As long as the Being whom he so freely names remains surrounded with the associations which in this country we bring with us out of our child years, not all the logic in the world would make us listen to language such as this. It is not so—we know it, and it is enough. We are well aware of the phalanx of difficulties which lie about our ordinary theistic conceptions. They are quite enough, if religion depended on speculative consistency, and not in obedience of life, to perplex and terrify us. What are we? what *is* anything? If it be not divine, what is it then? If created—out of what is it created? and how created—and why? These questions, and others far more momentous which we do not enter upon here, may be asked and cannot be answered; but we cannot any the more consent to Spinoza on the ground that he alone consistently provides an answer; because, as we have said again and again, we do not care to have them answered at all. Conscience is the single tribunal to which we will be referred, and conscience declares imperatively that what he says is not true. But of all this it is painful to speak, and as far as possible we

designedly avoid it. Pantheism is not Atheism, but the Infinite Positive and the Infinite Negative are not so remote from one another in their practical bearings: only let us remember that we are far indeed from the truth if we think that God to Spinoza was *nothing else* but that world which we experience. It is but one of infinite expressions of Him, a conception which makes us giddy in the effort to realize it.

We have arrived at last at the outwork of the whole matter in its bearings upon life and human duty. It was in the search after this last, that Spinoza, as we said, travelled over so strange a country, and we now expect his conclusions. To discover the true good of man, to direct his actions to such ends as will secure to him real and lasting felicity, and by a comparison of his powers with the objects offered to them, to ascertain how far they are capable of arriving at these objects, and by what means they can best be trained towards them—is the aim which Spinoza assigns to philosophy. "Most people," he adds, "deride or vilify their nature; it is a better thing to endeavour to understand it; and however extravagant it may be thought in me to do so, I propose to analyse the properties of that nature as if it were a mathematical figure." Mind, being, as we have seen, nothing else than the idea corresponding to this or that affection of body; we are not, therefore, to think of it as a faculty, but simply and merely as an act. There is no general power called intellect, any more than there is any general abstract volition, but only *hic et ille intellectus et hæc et illa volitio;* and again, by the word Mind, is understood not merely acts of will or intellect, but all forms also of consciousness of sensation or emotion. The human body being composed of many small bodies, the mind is similarly composed of many minds, and the unity of body and of mind depends on the relation which the component portions maintain towards each other. This is obviously the case with body, and if we can translate metaphysics into common experience, it is equally the case with mind. There are pleasures of sense and pleasures of intellect;

a thousand tastes, tendencies, and inclinations form our mental composition; and evidently since one contradicts another, and each has a tendency to become dominant, it is only in the harmonious equipoise of their several activities, in their due and just subordination, that any unity of action or consistency of feeling is possible. After a masterly analysis of all these tendencies (the most complete by far which has ever been made by any moral philosopher), Spinoza arrives at the principles under which such unity and consistency can be obtained as the condition upon which a being so composed can look for any sort of happiness. And these principles, arrived at as they are by a route so different, are the same, and are proposed by Spinoza as being the same, as those of the Christian Religion.

It might seem impossible in a system which binds together in so inexorable a sequence the relations of cause and effect, to make a place for the action of human self-control; but consideration will show, that however vast the difference between those who deny and those who affirm the liberty of the will (in the sense in which the expression is usually understood), it is not a difference which affects the conduct or alters the practical bearings of it. It is quite possible that conduct may be determined by laws; laws as absolute as those of matter: and yet that the one as well as the other may be brought under control by a proper understanding of those laws. Now, experience seems plainly to say, that while all our actions arise out of desire—that whatever we do, we do for the sake of something which we wish to be or to obtain — we are differently affected towards what is proposed to us as an object of desire, in proportion as we understand the nature of such object in itself and in its consequences. The better we know the better we act, and the fallacy of all common arguments against necessitarianism lies in the assumption that it leaves no room for self-direction; whereas it merely insists in exact conformity with experience on the conditions under which self-determination is possible. Conduct, according to the necessitarian, depends on knowledge.

Let a man certainly know that there is poison in the cup of wine before him, and he will not drink it. By the law of cause and effect, his desire for the wine is overcome by the fear of the pain or the death which will follow; and so with everything which comes before him. Let the consequences of any action be clear, definite, and inevitable, and though Spinoza would not say that the knowledge of them will be absolutely sufficient to determine the conduct (because the clearest knowledge may be overborne by violent passion), yet it is the best which we have to trust to, and will do much if it cannot do all. On this hypothesis, after a diagnosis of the various tendencies of human nature, called commonly the passions and affections, he returns upon the nature of our ordinary knowledge to derive out of it the means for their control: all these tendencies of themselves seek their own objects—seek them blindly and immoderately; and all the mistakes, and all the unhappinesses of life, arise from the want of due understanding of these objects, and a just subordination of the desire for them. His analysis is remarkably clear; but it is too long for us to enter upon it; the important thing being the character of the control which is to be exerted. And to arrive at this, he employs a distinction of great practical utility, and which is peculiarly his own. Following his tripartite division of knowledge, he finds all kinds of it arrange themselves under one of two classes, and to be either adequate or inadequate. By adequate knowledge he means not necessarily what is exhaustive and complete, but what, as far as it goes, is distinct and unconfused: by inadequate, what we know merely as fact either derived from our own sensations, or from the authority of others; but of the connexion of which with other facts, of the causes, effects, or meaning of which we know nothing. We may have an adequate idea of a circle, though we are unacquainted with all the properties which belong to it; we conceive it distinctly as a figure generated by the rotation of a line, one end of which is stationary. Phenomena, on the other hand, however made known to us—phenomena of the

senses, and phenomena of experience, as long as they remain phenomena merely, and unseen in any higher relation—we can never know except as inadequately. We cannot tell what outward things are by coming in contact with certain features of them. We have a very imperfect acquaintance even with our own bodies, and the sensations which we experience of various kinds rather indicate to us the nature of these bodies themselves than of the objects which affect them. Now it is obvious that the greater part of mankind act only upon knowledge of this latter kind. The amusements, even the active pursuits of most of us, remain wholly within the range of uncertainty; and, therefore, necessarily are full of hazard and precariousness: little or nothing issues as we expect; we look for pleasure and we find pain; we shun one pain and find a greater; and thus arises the ineffectual character which we so complain of in life—the disappointments, failures, mortifications which form the material of so much moral meditation on the vanity of the world. Much of all this is inevitable from the constitution of our nature. The mind is too infirm to be entirely occupied with higher knowledge. The conditions of life oblige us to act in many cases which cannot be understood by us except with the utmost inadequacy; and the resignation to the higher will which has determined all things in the wisest way, is imperfect in the best of us. Yet much is possible, if not all; and, although through a large tract of life "there comes one event to all, to the wise and to the unwise," "yet wisdom excelleth folly as far as light excelleth darkness." The phenomena of experience by inductive experiment, and just and careful consideration, arrange themselves under laws uniform in their operation, and furnishing a guide to the judgment; and over all things, although the interval must remain unexplored for ever, because what we would search into is Infinite, may be seen the beginning of all things, the absolute eternal God. "Mens humana," Spinoza continues, "quædam agit, quædam vero patitur." In so far as it is influenced by inadequate ideas, "eatenus patitur"—it is passive and

in bondage, it is the sport of fortune and caprice: in so far as its ideas are adequate, "eatenus agit"—it is active, it is itself. While we are governed by outward temptations, by the casual pleasures, the fortunes or the misfortunes of life, we are but instruments, yielding ourselves to be acted upon as the animal is acted on by its appetites, or the inanimate matter by the laws which bind it—we are slaves—instruments, it may be, of some higher purpose in the order of nature, but in ourselves nothing; instruments which are employed for a special work, and which are consumed in effecting it. So far, on the contrary, as we know clearly what we do, as we understand what we are, and direct our conduct not by the passing emotion of the moment, but by a grave, clear, and constant knowledge of what is really good, so far we are said to act—we are ourselves the spring of our own activity—we desire the genuine well-being of our entire nature, and *that* we can always find, and it never disappoints us when found.

All things desire life, seek for energy, and fuller and ampler being. The component parts of man, his various appetites and passions, are seeking for this while pursuing each its own immoderate indulgence; and it is the primary law of every single being that it so follows what will give it increased vitality. Whatever will contribute to such increase is the proper good of each; and the good of man as a united being is measured and determined by the effect of it upon his collective powers. The appetites gather power from their several objects of desire; but the power of the part is the weakness of the whole; and man as a collective person gathers life, being, and self-mastery only from the absolute good,—the source of all real good, and truth, and energy,—that is, God. The love of God is the extinction of all other loves and all other desires; to know God, as far as man can know him, is power, self-government, and peace. And this is virtue, and this is blessedness. Thus, by a formal process of demonstration, we are brought round to the old conclusions of theology; and Spinoza protests that it is no new doctrine which he is

teaching, but that it is one which in various dialects has been believed from the beginning of the world. It is a necessary consequence of the simple propositions that happiness depends on the consistency and coherency of character, and that such coherency can only be given by the knowledge of the One Being, to know whom is to know all things adequately, and to love whom is to have conquered every other inclination. The more entirely our minds rest on Him, the more distinctly we regard all things in their relation to Him, the more we cease to be under the dominion of external things ; we surrender ourselves consciously to do His will, and as living men and not as passive things we become the instruments of His power. When the true nature and true causes of our affections become clear to us, they have no more power to influence us. The more we understand, the less can feeling sway us ; we know that all things are what they are, because they are so constituted that they could not be otherwise, and we cease to be angry with our brother, we cease to hate him ; we shall not fret at disappointment, nor complain of fortune, because no such thing as fortune exists ; and if we are disappointed it is better than if we had succeeded, not perhaps for ourselves, yet for the universe. We cannot fear, when nothing can befall us except what God wills, and we shall not violently hope when the future, whatever it be, will be the best which is possible. Seeing all things in their place in the everlasting order, Past and Future will not affect us. The temptation of present pleasure will not overcome the certainty of future pain, for the pain will be as sure as the pleasure, and we shall see all things under a rule of adamant. The foolish and the ignorant are led astray by the idea of contingency, and expect to escape the just issues of their actions ; the wise man will know that each action brings with it its inevitable consequences, which even God cannot change without ceasing to be Himself.

In such a manner, through all the conditions of life, Spinoza pursues the advantages which will accrue to man from the knowledge of God, God and man

being what his philosophy has described them. It cannot be denied that it is most beautiful; although much of its beauty is perhaps due to associations which have arisen out of Christianity, and which in the system of Pantheism have no proper abiding place. Retaining, indeed, all that is beautiful in Christianity, he even seems to have relieved himself of the more fearful features of the general creed. He acknowledges no hell, no devil, no positive and active agency at enmity with God; but sees in all things infinite gradations of beings, all in their way obedient, and all fulfilling the part allotted to them. Doubtless a pleasant exchange and a grateful deliverance, if only we could persuade ourselves that a hundred pages of judiciously arranged demonstrations could really and indeed have worked it for us. If we could indeed believe that we could have the year without its winter, day without night, sunlight without shadow. Evil is unhappily too real a thing to be so disposed of.

Yet if we cannot believe Spinoza's system taken in its entire completeness, yet we may not blind ourselves to the beauty of his practical rule of life, or the disinterestedness and calm nobility which pervades it. He will not hear of a virtue which desires to be rewarded. Virtue is the power of God in the human soul, and that is the exhaustive end of all human desire. "Beatitudo non est virtutis pretium, sed ipsa virtus. Nihil aliud est quam ipsa animi acquiescentia, quæ ex Dei intuitivâ cognitione oritur." And the same spirit of generosity exhibits itself in all his conclusions. The ordinary objects of desire, he says, are of such a kind that for one man to obtain them is for another to lose them; and this alone would suffice to prove that they are not what any man should labour after. But the fullness of God suffices for us all, and he who possesses this good desires only to communicate it to every one, and to make all mankind as happy as himself. And again:—"The wise man will not speak in society of his neighbour's faults, and sparingly of the infirmity of human nature; but he will speak largely of human virtue and

human power, and of the means by which that nature can best be perfected, so to lead men to put away that fear and aversion with which they look on goodness, and learn with relieved hearts to love and desire it." And once more:—"He who loves God will not desire that God should love him in return with any partial or particular affection, for that is to desire that God for his sake should change his everlasting nature and become lower than himself."

One grave element, indeed, of a religious faith would seem in such a system to be necessarily wanting. Where individual action is resolved into the modified activity of the Universal Being, all absorbing and all evolving, the individuality of the personal man would at best appear but an evanescent and unreal shadow. Such individuality, however, as we now possess, whatever it be, might continue to exist in a future state as really as it exists in the present, and those to whom it belongs might be anxious naturally for its persistence. And yet it would seem that if the soul be nothing except the idea of a body actually existing, when that body is decomposed into its elements, the soul corresponding to it must accompany it into an answering dissolution. And this, indeed, Spinoza in one sense actually affirms, when he denies to the mind any power of retaining consciousness of what has befallen it in life, "nisi durante corpore." But Spinozism is a philosophy full of surprises; and our calculations of what *must* belong to it are perpetually baffled. The imagination, the memory, the senses, whatever belongs to inadequate perception, perish necessarily and eternally; and the man who has been the slave of his inclinations, who has no knowledge of God, and no active possession of himself, having in life possessed no personality, loses in death the appearance of it with the dissolution of the body.

Nevertheless, there is in God an idea expressing the essence of the mind, united to the mind as the mind is united to the body, and thus there is in the soul something of an everlasting nature which cannot utterly perish. And here Spinoza, as he often does in many of

his most solemn conclusions, deserts for a moment the thread of his demonstrations, and appeals to the consciousness. In spite of our non-recollection of what passed before our birth, in spite of all difficulties from the dissolution of the body, "Nihilo minus," he says, "sentimus experimurque nos æternos esse. Nam mens non minus res illas sentit quas intelligendo concipit, quam quas in memoriâ habet. Mentis enim oculi quibus res videt observatque sunt ipsæ demonstrationes."

This perception, immediately revealed to the mind, falls into easy harmony with the rest of the system. As the mind is not a faculty, but an act or acts,—not a power of perception, but the perception itself,—in its high union with the highest object (to use the metaphysical language which Coleridge has made popular and perhaps partially intelligible), the object and the subject become one; a difficult expression, but the meaning of which (as it bears on our present subject) may be something of this kind:—If knowledge be followed as it ought to be followed, and all objects of knowledge be regarded in their relations to the One Absolute Being, the knowledge of particular outward things, of nature, or life, or history, becomes in fact, knowledge of God; and the more complete or adequate such knowledge, the more the mind is raised above what is perishable in the phenomena to the idea or law which lies beyond them. It learns to dwell exclusively upon the eternal, not upon the temporary; and being thus occupied with the everlasting laws, and its activity subsisting in its perfect union with them, it contracts in itself the character of the objects which possess it. Thus we are emancipated from the conditions of duration; we are liable even to death only *quatenus patimur*, as we are passive things and not active intelligences; and the more we possess such knowledge and are possessed by it, the more entirely the passive is superseded by the active—so that at last the human soul may "become of such a nature that the portion of it which will perish with the body in in comparison with that of it which shall endure, shall be insignificant and *nullius momenti*." (*Eth* v. 38.)

Such are the principal features of a philosophy, the influence of which upon Europe, direct and indirect, it is not easy to over-estimate. The account of it is far from being an account of the whole of Spinoza's labours; his "Tractatus Theologico-Politicus" was the forerunner of German historical criticism; the whole of which has been but the application of principles laid down in that remarkable work. But this was not a subject on which, upon the present occasion, it was desirable to enter, and we have designedly confined ourselves to the system which is most associated with the name of its author. It is this which has been really powerful, which has stolen over the minds even of thinkers who imagine themselves most opposed to it. It has appeared in the absolute Pantheism of Schelling and Hegel, in the Pantheistic Christianity of Herder and Schleiermacher. Passing into practical life it has formed the strong shrewd judgment of Goethe, while again it has been able to unite with the theories of the most extreme materialism.

It lies too, perhaps (and here its influence has been unmixedly good) at the bottom of that more reverent contemplation of nature which has caused the success of our modern landscape painting, which inspired Wordsworth's poetry, and which, if ever physical science is to become an instrument of intellectual education, must first be infused into the lessons of nature; the sense of that "something" interfused in the material world—

> "Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
> And the round ocean, and the living air,
> And the blue sky, and in the mind of man;—
> A motion and a spirit, which impels
> All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
> And rolls through all things."

If we shrink from regarding the extended universe, with Spinoza, as an actual manifestation of Almighty God, we are unable to rest in the mere denial that it is this. We go on to ask what it *is*, and we are obliged to conclude thus much at least of it, that every smallest

being was once a thought in his mind; and in the study of what he has made we are really and truly studying a revelation of himself.

It is not here, it is not on the physical, it is rather on the moral side, that the point of main offence is lying; in that excuse for evil and for evil men which the necessitarian theory will furnish, disguise it in what fair-sounding words we will. So plain this is, that common-sense people, and especially English people, cannot bring themselves even to consider the question without impatience, and turn disdainfully and angrily from a theory which confuses their plain instincts of right and wrong. Although, however, error on this side is infinitely less mischievous than on the other, no vehement error can exist in this world with impunity; and it does appear that in our common view of these matters we have closed our eyes to certain grave facts of experience, and have given the fatalist a vantage ground of real truth which we ought to have considered and allowed. At the risk of tediousness we shall enter briefly into this unpromising ground. Life and the necessities of life are our best philosophers if we will only listen honestly to what they say to us; and dislike the lesson as we may, it is cowardice which refuses to hear it.

The popular belief is, that right and wrong lies before every man, and that he is free to choose between them, and the responsibility of choice rests with himself. The fatalist's belief is that every man's actions are determined by causes external and internal over which he has no power, leaving no room for any moral choice whatever. The first is contradicted by plain facts; the second by the instinct of conscience. Even Spinoza allows that for practical purposes we are obliged to regard the future as contingent, and ourselves as able to influence it; and it is incredible that both our inward convictions and our outward conduct should be built together upon a falsehood. But if, as Butler says, whatever be the speculative account of the matter, we are practically forced to regard ourselves as free, this is but half the

truth, for it may be equally said that practically we are forced to regard each other as *not* free; and to make allowance, every moment, for influences for which we cannot hold each other personally responsible. If not, —if every person of sound mind (in the common acceptation of the term) be equally able at all times to act right if only he *will*,—why all the care which we take of children? why the pains to keep them from bad society? why do we so anxiously watch their disposition, to determine the education which will best answer to it? Why in cases of guilt do we vary our moral censure according to the opportunities of the offender? Why do we find excuses for youth, for inexperience, for violent natural passion, for bad education, bad example? Except that we feel that all these things do affect the culpability of the guilty person, and that it is folly and inhumanity to disregard them. But what we act upon in private life we cannot acknowledge in our general ethical theories, and while our conduct in detail is human and just, we have been contented to gather our speculative philosophy out of the broad and coarse generalisations of political necessity. In the swift haste of social life we must indeed treat men as we find them. We have no time to make allowances; and the graduation of punishment by the scale of guilt is a mere impossibility. A thief is a thief in the law's eye though he has been trained from his cradle in the kennels of St. Giles's; and definite penalties must be attached to definite acts, the conditions of political life not admitting of any other method of dealing with them. But it is absurd to argue from such rude necessity that each act therefore, by whomsoever committed, is of specific culpability. The act is one thing, the moral guilt is another. And there are many cases in which, as Butler again allows, if we trace a sinner's history to the bottom, the guilt attributable to himself appears to vanish altogether.

This is all plain matter of fact, and as long as we continue to deny or ignore it, there will be found men (not bad men, but men who love the truth as much as our-

selves), who will see only what we neglect, and will insist upon it, and build their system upon it.

And again, if less obvious, yet not less real, are those natural tendencies which each of us brings with him into the world,—which we did not make, and yet which almost as much determine what we are to be, as the properties of the seed determine the tree which shall grow from it. Men are self-willed, or violent, or obstinate, or weak, or generous, or affectionate; there is as large difference in their dispositions as in the features of their faces; and that by no original act of their own. Duties which are easy to one, another finds difficult or impossible. It is with morals as it is with art. Two children are taught to draw; one learns with ease, the other hardly or never. In vain the master will show him what to do. It seems so easy: it seems as if he had only to *will* and the thing would be done; but it is not so. Between the desire and the execution lies the incapable organ which only wearily, and after long labour, imperfectly accomplishes what is required of it. And the same, *to a certain extent*, unless we will deny the plainest facts of experience, holds true in moral actions. No wonder, therefore, that evaded or thrust aside as these things are in the popular beliefs, as soon as they are recognized in their full reality they should be mistaken for the whole truth, and that the free-will theory be thrown aside as a chimera.

It may be said, and it often is said, that all such reasonings are merely sophistical—that however we entangle ourselves in logic, we are conscious that we are free; we know—we are as sure as we are of our existence—that we have power to act this way or that way, exactly as we choose. But this is less plain than it seems; and if we grant it, it proves less than it appears to prove. It may be true that we can act as we choose, but can we *choose?* Is not our choice determined for us? We cannot determine from the fact, because we always *have chosen* as soon as we act, and we cannot replace the conditions in such a way as to discover whether we could have chosen anything else. The

stronger motive may have determined our volition without our perceiving it; and if we desire to prove our independence of motive, by showing that we *can* choose something different from that which we should naturally have chosen, we still cannot escape from the circle, this very desire becoming, as Mr. Hume observes, itself a *motive*. Again, consciousness of the possession of any power may easily be delusive; we can properly judge what our powers are only by what they have actually accomplished; we know what we *have* done, and we may infer from having done it, that our power was equal to what it achieved; but it is easy for us to overrate ourselves if we try to measure our abilities in themselves. A man who can leap five yards may think that he can leap six; yet he may try and fail. A man who can write prose may only learn that he cannot write poetry from the badness of the verses which he produces. To the appeal to consciousness of power there is always an answer:—that we may believe ourselves to possess it, but that experience proves that we may be deceived.

There are, however, another set of feelings which cannot be set aside in this way, which do prove that, in some sense or other, in some degree or other, we are the authors of our own actions,—that there is a point at which we begin to be responsible for them. It is one of the clearest of all inward phenomena, that, where two or more courses involving moral issues are before us, whether we have a consciousness of *power* to choose between them or not, we have a consciousness that we *ought* to choose between them; a sense of duty ὅτι δεῖ τοῦτο πράττειν, as Aristotle expresses it, which we cannot shake off. Whatever this involves (and some measure of freedom it must involve or it is nonsense), the feeling exists within us, and refuses to yield before all the batteries of logic. It is not that of the two courses we know that one is in the long run the best, and the other more immediately tempting. We have a sense of obligation irrespective of consequence, the violation of which is followed again by a sense of

self-disapprobation, of censure, of blame. In vain will Spinoza tell us that such feelings, incompatible as they are with the theory of powerlessness, are mere mistakes arising out of a false philosophy. They are primary facts of sensation most vivid in minds of most vigorous sensibility; and although they may be extinguished by habitual profligacy, or possibly, perhaps, destroyed by logic, the paralysis of the conscience is no more a proof that it is not a real power of perceiving real things, than blindness is a proof that sight is not a real power. The perceptions of worth and worthlessness are not conclusions of reasoning, but immediate sensations like those of seeing and hearing; and although, like the other senses, they may be mistaken sometimes in the accounts they render to us, the fact of the existence of such feelings at all proves that there is something which corresponds to them. If there be any such things as "true ideas," or clear distinct perceptions at all, this of praise and blame is one of them, and according to Spinoza's own rule we must accept what it involves. And it involves that somewhere or other the influence of causes ceases to operate, and that some degree of power there is in men of self-determination, by the amount of which, and not by their specific actions, moral merit or demerit is to be measured. Speculative difficulties remain in abundance. It will be said in a case, *e.g.* of moral trial, that there may have been *power*; but was there *power enough* to resist the temptation? If there was, then it was resisted. If there was not, there was no responsibility. We must answer again from a practical instinct. We refuse to allow men to be considered all equally guilty who have committed the same faults; and we insist that their actions must be measured against their opportunities. But a similar conviction assures us that there is somewhere a point of freedom. Where that point is, where other influences terminate, and responsibility begins, will always be of intricate and often impossible solution. But if there be such a point at all, it is fatal to necessitarianism, and man is what he has been hitherto

supposed to be—an exception in the order of nature, with a power not differing in degree but differing in kind from those of other creatures. Moral life, like all life, is a mystery; and as to dissect the body will not reveal the secret of animation, so with the actions of the moral man. The spiritual life, which alone gives them meaning and being, glides away before the logical dissecting knife, and leaves it but a corpse to work upon.

# REYNARD THE FOX

In a recent dissatisfied perusal of Mr. Macaulay's collected articles, we were especially offended by his curious and undesirable Essay on Machiavelli. Declining the various solutions which have been offered to explain how a man supposed to be so great could have lent his genius to the doctrine of "the Prince," he has advanced a hypothesis of his own, which may or may not be true, as an interpretation of Machiavelli's character, but which, as an exposition of a universal ethical theory, is as detestable as what it is brought forward to explain. . . . We will not show Mr. Macaulay the disrespect of supposing that he has unsuccessfully attempted an elaborate piece of irony. It is possible that he may have been exercising his genius with a paradox, but the subject is not of the sort in which we can patiently permit such exercises. It is hard work with all of us to keep ourselves straight, even when we see the road with all plainness as it lies out before us; and clever men must be good enough to find something else to amuse themselves with, instead of dusting our eyes with sophistry.

In Mr. Macaulay's conception of human nature, the basenesses and the excellencies of mankind are no more than accidents of circumstance, the results of national feeling and national capabilities; and cunning and treachery, and lying, and such other "natural defences of the weak against the strong," are in themselves neither good nor bad, except as thinking makes them so. They are the virtues of a weak people, and they will be as much admired, and are as justly admirable; they are to the full as compatible with the highest

graces and most lofty features of the heart and intellect, as any of those opposite so called heroisms which we are generally so unthinking as to allow to monopolize the name. . . . Cunning is the only resource of the feeble: and why may we not feel for victorious cunning as strong a sympathy as for the bold, downright, open bearing of the strong? . . . That there may be no mistake in the essayist's meaning, that he may drive the nail home into the English understanding, he takes an illustration which shall be familiar to all of us in the characters of Iago and Othello. To our northern thought, the free and noble nature of the Moor is wrecked through a single infirmity, by a fiend in the human form. To one of Machiavelli's Italians, Iago's keen-edged intellect would have appeared as admirable as Othello's daring appears to us, and Othello himself little better than a fool and a savage. . . . It is but a change of scene, of climate, of the animal qualities of the frame, and evil has become a good, and good has become evil. . . . Now, our displeasure with Mr. Macaulay is, not that he has advanced a novel and mischievous theory: it was elaborated long ago in the finely-tempered dialectics of the Schools of Rhetoric, at Athens; and so long as such a phenomenon as a cultivated rogue remains possible among mankind, it will reappear in all languages and under any number of philosophical disguises. . . . Seldom or never, however, has it appeared with so little attempt at disguise. It has been left for questionable poets and novelists to idealize the rascal genus: philosophers have escaped into the ambiguities of general propositions, and we do not remember elsewhere to have met with a serious ethical thinker deliberately laying two whole organic characters, with their vices and virtues in full life and bloom, side by side, asking himself which is best, and answering gravely that it is a matter of taste.

Mr. Macaulay has been bolder than his predecessors; he has shrunk from no conclusion, and looked directly into the very heart of the matter; he

has struck, as we believe, the very lowest stone of our ethical convictions, and declared that the foundation quakes under it.

For, ultimately, how do we know that right is right, and wrong is wrong? People in general accept it on authority; but authority itself must repose on some ulterior basis; and what is that? . . . Are we to say that in morals there is a system of primary axioms, out of which we develop our conclusions, and apply them, as they are needed, to life? It does not appear so. The analogy of morals is rather with art than with geometry. The grace of heaven gives us good men, and gives us beautiful creations; and we, perceiving by the instincts within ourselves that celestial presence in the objects on which we gaze, find out for ourselves the laws which make them what they are, not by comparing them with any antecedent theory, but by careful analysis of our own impressions, by asking ourselves what it is which we admire in them, and calling that good, and calling that beautiful.

So, then, if admiration be the first fact, if the sense of it be the ultimate ground on which the after temple of morality, as a system, upraises itself, if we can be challenged here on our own ground, and fail to make it good, what we call the life of the soul becomes a dream of a feeble enthusiast, and we moralists a mark for the sceptic's finger to point at with scorn.

Bold and ably urged arguments against our own convictions, if they do not confuse us, will usually send us back over our ground to re-examine the strength of our positions: and if we are honest with ourselves, we shall very often find points of some uncertainty left unguarded, of which the show of the strength of our enemy will oblige us to see better to the defence. . . . It was not without some shame, and much uneasiness, that, while we were ourselves engaged in this process, full of indignation with Mr. Macaulay, we heard a clear voice ringing in our ear, "Who art thou that judgest another?" and warning us of the presence in our own heart of a sympathy, which we could not deny,

with the sadly questionable hero of the German epic, *Reynard the Fox*. With our vulpine friend, we were on the edge of the very same abyss, if, indeed, we were not rolling in the depth of it. By what sophistry could we justify ourselves, if not by the very same which we had just been so eagerly condemning? And our conscience whispered to us that we had been swift to detect a fault in another, because it was the very fault to which, in our own heart of hearts, we had a latent leaning.

Was it so indeed, then? Was Reineke no better than Iago? Was the sole difference between them, that the *vates sacer* who had sung the exploits of Reineke loved the wicked rascal, and entangled us in loving him? It was a question to be asked. . . . And yet we had faith enough in the straightforwardness of our own sympathies to feel sure that it must admit of some sort of answer. And, indeed, we rapidly found an answer satisfactory enough to give us time to breathe, in remembering that Reineke, with all his roguery, has no malice in him. . . . It is not in his nature to hate; he could not do it if he tried. The characteristic of Iago is that deep motiveless malignity which rejoices in evil as its proper element, which loves evil as good men love virtue. In his calculations on the character of the Moor, he despises his unsuspicious trustingness as imbecility, while he hates him as a man because his nature is the perpetual opposite and perpetual reproach of his own. . . . Now Reineke would not have hurt a creature, not even Scharfenebbe, the crow's wife, when she came to peck his eyes out, if he had not been hungry; and that γαστρὸς ἀνάγκη, that craving of the stomach, makes a difference quite infinite. It is true that, like Iago, he rejoices in the exercise of his intellect; the sense of his power, and the scientific employment of his time are a real delight to him; but then, as we said, he does not love evil for its own sake; he is only somewhat indifferent to it. If the other animals venture to take liberties with him, he will repay them in their own coin, and get his quiet laugh

at them at the same time; but the object generally for which he lives is the natural one of getting his bread for himself and his family; and, as the great moralist says, "It is better to be bad for something than for nothing." Badness generally is undesirable; but badness in its essence, which may be called heroic badness, is gratuitous.

But this first thought served merely to give us a momentary relief from our alarm, and we determined we would sift the matter to the bottom, and no more expose ourselves to be taken at such disadvantage. We went again to the poem, with our eyes open, and our moral sense as keenly awake as a genuine wish to understand our feelings could make it. We determined that we would really know what we did feel and what we did not. We would not be lightly scared away from our friend, but neither would we any more allow our judgment to be talked down by that fluent tongue of his; he should have justice from us, he and his biographer, as far as it lay with us to discern justice and to render it.

And really on this deliberate perusal it did seem little less than impossible that we could find any conceivable attribute illustrated in Reineke's proceedings which we could dare to enter in our catalogue of virtue, and not blush to read it there. What sin is there in the Decalogue in which he has not steeped himself to the lips? To the lips, shall we say? nay, over head and ears — rolling and rollicking in sin. Murder, and theft, and adultery, sacrilege, perjury, lying—his very life is made of them. On he goes to the end, heaping crime on crime, and lie on lie, and at last, when it seems that justice, which has been so long vainly halting after him, has him really in her iron grasp, there is a solemn appeal to heaven, a challenge, a battle ordeal, in which, by means we may not venture even to whisper, the villain prospers, and comes out glorious, victorious, amidst the applause of a gazing world; and, to crown it all, the poet tells us that under the disguise of the animal name and form the world

of man is represented, and the true course of it; and the idea of the book is, that we who read it may learn therein to discern between good and evil, and choose the first and avoid the last. It seemed beyond the power of sophistry to whitewash Reineke, and the interest which still continued to cling to him in us seemed too nearly to resemble the unwisdom of the multitude, with whom success is the one virtue and failure the only crime.

It appeared, too, that although the animal disguises were too transparent to endure a moment's reflection, yet that they were so gracefully worn that such moment's reflection was not to be come at without an effort. Our imagination following the costume did imperceptibly betray our judgment; we admired the human intellect, the ever ready prompt sagacity and presence of mind. We delighted in the satire on the foolishnesses and greedinesses of our own fellow mankind; but in our regard for the hero we forgot his humanity wherever it was his interest that we should forget it, and while we admired him as a man we judged him only as a fox. We doubt whether it would have been possible if he had been described as an open acknowledged biped in coat and trousers, to have retained our regard for him. Something or other in us, either real rightmindedness, or humbug, or hypocrisy, would have obliged us to mix more censure with our liking than most of us do in the case as it stands. It may be that the dress of the fox throws us off our guard, and lets out a secret or two which we commonly conceal even from ourselves. When we have to pass an opinion upon bad people, who at the same time are clever and attractive, we say rather what we think we ought to feel than our real sensations; while with Reineke, being but an animal, we forget to make ourselves up, and for once our genuine tastes show themselves freely. . . . Some degree of truth there undoubtedly is in this. . . . But making all allowance for it—making all and over allowance for the trick which is passed upon our senses, there still remained a feeling

unresolved. The poem was not solely the apotheosis of a rascal in whom we were betrayed into taking an interest. And it was not a satire merely on the world, and on the men whom the world delight to honour; there was still something which really deserved to be liked in Reineke, and what it was we had as yet failed to discover.

"Two are better than one," and we resolved in our difficulty to try what our friends might have to say about it; the appearance of the Wurtemburg animals at the Exhibition came fortunately *apropos* to our assistance: a few years ago it was rare to find a person who had read the Fox Epic; and still more, of course, to find one whose judgment would be worth taking about it; but now the charming figures of Reineke himself, and the Lion King, and Isegrim, and Bruin, and Bellyn, and Hintze, and Grimbart, had set all the world asking who and what they were, and the story began to get itself known. The old editions, which had long slept unbound in reams upon the shelves, began to descend and clothe themselves in green and crimson. Mr. Dickens sent a summary of it round the households of England. Everybody began to talk of Reineke; and now, at any rate, we said to ourselves, we shall see whether we are alone in our liking—whether others share in this strange sympathy, or whether it be some unique and monstrous moral obliquity in ourselves.

We set to work, therefore, with all earnestness, feeling our way first with fear and delicacy, as conscious of our own delinquency, to gather judgments which should be wiser than our own, and correct ourselves, if it proved that we required correction, with whatever severity might be necessary. The result of which labour of ours was not a little surprising; we found that women invariably, with that clear moral instinct of theirs, at once utterly reprobated and detested our poor Reynard; detested the hero and detested the bard who sang of him with so much sympathy; while men we found almost invariably feeling just as we felt ourselves, only with this difference, that we saw no trace of uneasiness

in them about the matter. It was no little comfort to us, moreover, to find that the exceptions were rather among the half-men, the would-be extremely good, but whose goodness was of that dead and passive kind which spoke to but a small elevation of thought or activity; while just in proportion as a man was strong, and real, and energetic, was his ability to see good in Reineke. It was really most strange, one near friend of ours, a man who, as far as we knew (and we knew him well) had never done a wrong thing, when we ventured to hint something about roguery, replied, "You see, he was such a clever rogue, that he had a right." Another, whom we pressed more closely with that treacherous cannibal feast at Malepartus, on the body of poor Lampe, said, off-hand and with much impatience of such questioning, "Such fellows were made to be eaten." What could we do? It had come to this,—as in the exuberance of our pleasure with some dear child, no ordinary epithet will sometimes reach to express the vehemence of our affection, and borrowing language out of the opposites, we call him little rogue or little villain, so here, reversing the terms of the analogy, we bestow the fulness of our regard on Reineke because of that transcendantly successful roguery.

When we asked our friends how they came to feel as they did, they had little to say. They were not persons who could be suspected of any latent disposition towards evil doing, and yet though it appeared as if they were falling under the description of those unhappy ones who, if they did not such things themselves, yet "had pleasure in those who did them," they did not care to justify themselves. The fact was so: ἀρχὴ τὸ ὅτι: it was a fact—what could we want more? Some few attempted feebly to maintain that the book was a satire. But this only moved the difficulty a single step; for the fact of the sympathy remained unimpaired, and if it was a satire we were ourselves the objects of it. Others urged what we said above, that the story was only of poor animals that, according to Descartes, not only had no souls, but scarcely even life in any

original and sufficient sense, and therefore we need not trouble ourselves. But one of two alternatives it seemed we were bound to choose, either of which was fatal to the proposed escape. Either there was a man hiding under the fox's skin, or else, if real foxes have such brains as Reineke was furnished withal, no honest doubt could be entertained that some sort of conscience was not forgotten in the compounding of him, and he must be held answerable according to his knowledge.

What would Mr. Carlyle say of it, we thought, with his might and right? "The just thing in the long run is the strong thing." But Reineke had a long run out and came in winner. Does he only "seem to succeed?" Who does succeed, then, if he no more than seems? The vulpine intellect knows where the geese live, it is elsewhere said; but among Reineke's victims we do not remember one goose, in the literal sense of goose; and as to geese metaphorical, at least the whole visible world lies down complacently at his feet. Nor does Mr. Carlyle's expressed language on this very poem serve any better to help us—nay, it seems as if he feels uneasy in the neighbourhood of so strong a rascal, so briefly he dismisses him. "Worldly prudence is the only virtue which is certain of its reward." Nay, but there is more in it than that: no worldly prudence would command the voices which have been given in to us for Reineke.

Three only possibilities lay now before us: either we should, on searching, find something solid in this Fox's doings to justify success; or else the just thing was not always the strong thing; or it might be, that such very semblance of success was itself the most miserable failure; that the wicked man who was struck down and foiled, and foiled again, till he unlearnt his wickedness, or till he was disabled from any more attempting it, was blessed in his disappointment; that to triumph in wickedness, and to continue in it and to prosper to the end, was the last, worst penalty inflicted by the divine vengeance. Ἵν' ἀθάνατος ᾖ ἄδικος ὤν—to go on with injustice through this world and through all eternity,

uncleansed by any purgatorial fire, untaught by any untoward consequence to open his eyes and to see in its true accursed form the miserable demon to which he has sold himself,—this, of all catastrophes which could befal an evil man, was the deepest, lowest, and most savouring of hell, which the purest of the Grecian moralists could reason out for himself,—under which third hypothesis many an uneasy misgiving would vanish away, and Mr. Carlyle's broad aphorism be accepted by us with thankfulness.

It appeared, therefore, at any rate, to have come to this—that if we wanted a solution for our sphinx enigma, no Œdipus was likely to rise and find it for us; and that if we wanted help, we must make it for ourselves. This only we found, that if we sinned in our regard for the unworthy animal, we shared our sin with the largest number of our own sex; and, comforted with the sense of good fellowship, we went boldly to work upon our consciousness; and the imperfect analysis which we succeeded in accomplishing, we here lay before you, whoever you may be, who have felt, as we have felt, a regard which was a moral disturbance to you, and which you will be pleased if we enable you to justify—

> Si quid novisti rectius istis,
> Candidus imperti; si non, his utere mecum.

Following the clue which was thrust into our hand by the marked difference of the feelings of men upon the subject from those of women, we were at once satisfied that Reineke's goodness, if he had any, must lay rather in the active than the passive department of life. The negative obedience to prohibitory precepts, under which women are bound as well as men, as was already too clear, we were obliged to surrender as hopeless. But it seemed as if, with respect to men whose business is to do, and to labour, and to accomplish, this negative test was a seriously imperfect one; and it was quite as possible that a man who unhappily had broken many prohibitions might yet exhibit positive excellencies, as

that he might walk through life picking his way with the utmost assiduity, risking nothing and doing nothing, not committing a single sin, but keeping his talent carefully wrapt up in a napkin, and get sent, in the end, to outer darkness for his pains, as an unprofitable servant; and this appeared the more important to us, as it was very little dwelt upon by religious or moral teachers; and at the end of six thousand years, the popular notion of virtue, as far as it could get itself expressed, had not risen beyond the mere abstinence from certain specific bad actions.

The king of the beasts forgives Reineke on account of the substantial services which at various times he has rendered. His counsel was always the wisest, his hand the promptest in cases of difficulty; and all that dexterity, and politeness, and courtesy, and exquisite culture had not been learnt without an effort or without conquering many undesirable tendencies in himself. Men are not born with any art in its perfection, and he had made himself valuable by his own sagacity and exertion. Now, on the human stage, a man who has made himself valuable is certain to be valued. However we may pretend to estimate men according to the wrong things which they have done, or abstained from doing, we in fact follow the example of Nobel, the king of the beasts, and give them their places among us according to the serviceableness and capability which they display. We might mention not a few eminent public servants, whom the world delights to honour—ministers, statesmen, lawyers, men of science, artists, poets, soldiers, who, if they were tried by the negative test, would show but a poor figure; yet their value is too real to be dispensed with; and we tolerate unquestionable wrong to secure the services of eminent ability. The world really does, and it always has really done so from the beginning of the human history; and it is only indolence or cowardice which has left our ethical teaching halting so far behind the universal and necessary practice. Even questionable prima donnas, in virtue of their sweet voices, have their praises hymned

in drawing-room and newspaper, and applause rolls over them, and gold and bouquets shower on them from lips and hands which, except for those said voices, would treat them to a ruder reward. In real fact, we take our places in this world not according to what we are not, but according to what we are. His Holiness Pope Clement, when his audience-room rang with furious outcries for justice on Benvenuto Cellini, who, as far as half-a-dozen murders could form a title, was as fair a candidate for the gallows as ever swung from that unlucky wood, replied, "All this is very well, gentlemen: these murders are bad things, we know that. But where am I to get another Benvenuto, if you hang this one for me?"

Or, to take an acknowledged hero, one of the old Greek sort, the theme of the song of the greatest of human poets, whom it is less easy to refuse to admire than even our friend Reineke. Take Ulysses. It cannot be said that he kept his hands from taking what was not his, or his tongue from speaking what was not true; and if Frau Ermelyn had to complain (as indeed there was too much reason for her complaining) of certain infirmities in her good husband, Penelope, too, might have urged a thing or two, if she had known as much about the matter as we know, which the modern moralist would find it hard to excuse.

After all is said, the capable man is the man to be admired. The man who tries and fails, what is the use of him? We are in this world to do something—not to fail in doing it. Of your bunglers — helpless, inefficient persons, "unfit alike for good or ill," who try one thing, and fail because they are not strong enough, and another, because they have not energy enough, and a third, because they have no talent — inconsistent, unstable, and therefore never to excel, what shall we say of them? what use is there in them? what hope is there of them? what can we wish for them? τὸ μήποτ' εἶναι πάντ' ἄριστον. It were better for them they had never been born. To be able to do what a man tries to do, that is the first requisite; and given that, we

may hope all things for him. "Hell is paved with good intentions," the proverb says; and the enormous proportion of bad successes in this life lie between the desire and the execution. Give us a man who is able to do what he settles that he desires to do, and we have the one thing indispensable. If he can succeed doing ill, much more he can succeed doing well. Show him better, and, at any rate, there is a chance that he will do better.

We are not concerned here with Benvenuto or with Ulysses further than to show, through the position which we all consent to give them, that there is much unreality, against which we must be on our guard. And if we fling off an old friend, and take to affecting a hatred of him which we do not feel, we have scarcely gained by the exchange, even though originally our friendship may have been misplaced.

Capability no one will deny to Reineke. That is the very *differentia* of him. An "animal capable" would be his sufficient definition. Here is another very genuinely valuable feature about him—his wonderful singleness of character. Lying, treacherous, cunning scoundrel as he is, there is a wholesome absence of humbug about him. Cheating all the world, he never cheats himself; and while he is a hypocrite, he is always a conscious hypocrite—a form of character, however paradoxical it may seem, a great deal more accessible than the other of the unconscious sort. Ask Reineke for the principles of his life, and if it suited his purpose to tell you, he could do so with the greatest exactness. There would be no discrepancy between the profession and the practice. He is most truly single-minded, and therefore stable in his ways, and therefore as the world goes, and in the world's sense, successful. Whether really successful is a question we do not care here to enter on; but only to say this—that of all unsuccessful men in every sense, either divine, or human, or devilish, there is none equal to old Bunyan's Mr. Facing-both-ways —the fellow with one eye on Heaven and one on earth —who sincerely preaches one thing, and sincerely does

another; and from the intensity of his unreality is unable either to see or feel the contradiction. Serving God with his lips, and with the half of his mind which is not bound up in the world; and serving the devil with his actions, and with the other half, he is substantially trying to cheat both God and the devil, and is, in fact, only cheating himself and his neighbours. This, of all characters upon the earth, appears to us to be the one of whom there is no hope at all—a character becoming, in these days, alarmingly abundant; and the abundance of which makes us find even in a Reineke an inexpressible relief.

But what we most thoroughly value in him is his capacity. He can do what he sets to work to do. That blind instinct with which the world shouts and claps its hand for the successful man, is one of those latent forces in us which are truer than we know; it is the universal confessional to which Nature leads us, and, in her intolerance of disguise and hypocrisy, compels us to be our own accusers. Whoever can succeed in a given condition of society, can succeed only in virtue of fulfilling the terms which society exacts of him; and if he can fulfil them triumphantly, of course it rewards him and praises him. He is what the rest of the world would be, if their powers were equal to their desires. He has accomplished what they all are vaguely, and with imperfect consistency, struggling to accomplish; and the character of the conqueror—the means and appliances by which he has climbed up that great pinnacle on which he stands victorious, the observed of all observers, is no more than a very exact indicator of the amount of real virtue in the age, out of which he stands prominent.

We are forced to acknowledge that it was not a very virtuous age in which Reineke made himself a great man; but that was the fault of the age as much as the fault of him. His nature is to succeed wherever he is. If the age had required something else of him, then he would have been something else. Whatever it had said to him "do, and I will make you my hero," that

Reineke would have done. No appetite makes a slave of him—no faculty refuses obedience to his will. His entire nature is under perfect organic control to the one supreme authority. And the one object for which he lives, and for which, let his lot have been cast in whatever century it might, he would always have lived, is to rise, to thrive, to prosper, and become great.

The world as he found it said to him—Prey upon us, we are your oyster; let your wit open us. If you will only do it cleverly—if you will take care that we shall not close upon your fingers in the process, you may devour us at your pleasure, and we shall feel ourselves highly honoured. Can we wonder at a fox of Reineke's abilities taking such a world at its word?

And let it not be supposed that society in this earth of ours is ever so viciously put together, is ever so totally without organic life, that a rogue, unredeemed by any merit, can prosper in it. There is no strength in rottenness; and when it comes to that, society dies and falls in pieces. Success, as it is called, even worldly success, is impossible, without some exercise of what is called moral virtue, without some portion of it, infinitesimally small, perhaps, but still some. Courage, for instance, steady self-confidence, self-trust, self-reliance—that only basis and foundation-stone on which a strong character can rear itself—do we not see this in Reineke. While he lives he lives for himself; but if it comes to dying, he can die like his betters; and his wit is not of that effervescent sort which will fly away at the sight of death and leave him panic-stricken. It is true there is a meaning to that word courage, which was perhaps not to be found in the dictionary in which Reineke studied. "I hope I am afraid of nothing, Trim," said my uncle Toby, "except doing a wrong thing." With Reineke there was no "except." His digestive powers shrank from no action, good or bad, which would serve his turn. Yet it required no slight measure of courage to treat his fellow-creatures with the steady disrespect with which Reineke treats them. To walk along among them, regardless of any interest but his own;

out of mere wantonness to hook them up like so many cock-chafers, and spin them for his pleasure; not like Domitian, with an imperial army to hold them down during the operation, but with no other assistance but his own little body and large wit; it was something to venture upon. And a world which would submit to be so treated, what could he do but despise?

To the animals utterly below ourselves, external to our own species, we hold ourselves bound by no law.

We say to them, *vos non vobis*, without any uneasy misgivings. We rob the bees of their honey, the cattle of their lives, the horse and the ass of their liberty. We kill the wild animals that they may not interfere with our pleasures; and acknowledge ourselves bound to them by no terms except what are dictated by our own convenience. And why should Reineke have acknowledged an obligation any more than we, to creatures so utterly below himself? He was so clever, as our friend said, that he had a right. That he *could* treat them so, Mr. Carlyle would say, proves that he had a right.

But it is a mistake to say he is without a conscience. No bold creature is ever totally without one. Even Iago shows some sort of conscience. Respecting nothing else in heaven or earth, he respects and even reverences his own intellect. After one of those sweet interviews with Roderigo, his, what we must call, conscience takes him to account for his company; and he pleads to it in his own justification—

> "For I mine own gained knowledge should *profane*
> Were I to waste myself with such a snipe
> But for my sport and profit."

And Reineke, if we take the mass of his misdeeds, preyed chiefly, like our own Robin Hood, on rogues who were greater rogues than himself. If Bruin chose to steal Rusteviel's honey, if Hintze trespassed in the priest's granary, they were but taken in their own evil-doings. And what is Isegrim, the worst of Reineke's victims, but a great heavy, stupid, lawless brute?—fair

type, we will suppose, of not a few Front-de-Bœufs and other so-called nobles of the poet's era, whose will to do mischief was happily limited by their obtuseness; or that French baron, Sir Gilbert de Retz, we believe, was his name, who, like Isegrim, had studied at the universities, and passed for learned, whose after-dinner pastime for many years, as it proved at last, was to cut children's throats for the pleasure of watching them die—we may well feel gratitude that a Reineke was provided to be the scourge of such monsters as they; and we have a thorough pure, exuberant satisfaction in seeing the intellect in that little weak body triumph over them and trample them down. This, indeed, this victory of intellect over brute force is one great secret of our pleasure in the poem, and goes far, in the Carlyle direction to satisfy us that, at any rate, it is not given to mere base physical strength to win in the battle of life, even in times when physical strength is apparently the only recognised power.

We are insensibly falling from our self-assumed judicial office into that of advocacy; and sliding into what may be plausibly urged, rather than standing fast on what we can surely affirm. Yet there are cases when it is fitting for the judge to become the advocate of an undefended prisoner; and advocacy is only plausible when a few words of truth are mixed with what we say, like the few drops of wine which colour and faintly flavour the large draught of water. Such few grains or drops, whatever they may be, we must leave to the kindness of Reynard's friends to distil for him, while we continue a little longer in the same strain.

After all it may be said, what is it in man's nature which is really admirable? It is idle for us to waste our labour in passing Reineke through the moral crucible unless we shall recognise the results when we obtain them; and in these moral sciences our analytical tests can only be obtained by a study of our own internal experience. If we desire to know what we admire in Reineke we must look for what we admire in

ourselves. And what is that? Is it what on Sundays, and on set occasions, and when we are mounted on our moral stilts, we are pleased to call goodness, probity, obedience, humility? Is it? Is it really? Is it not rather the face and form which Nature made—the strength which is ours, we know not how—our talents, our rank, our possessions? It appears to us that we most value in ourselves and most admire in our neighbour not acquisitions, but *gifts*. A man does not praise himself for being good. If he praise himself he is not good. The first condition of goodness is forgetfulness of self; and where self has entered, under however plausible a form, the health is but skin-deep, and underneath there is corruption—and so through everything. We value, we are vain of, proud of, or whatever you please to call it, not what we have done for ourselves, but what has been done for us—what has been given to us by the upper powers. We look up to high-born men, to wealthy men, to fortunate men, to clever men. Is it not so? Who do we choose for the county member, the magistrate, the officer, the minister? The good man we leave to the humble enjoyment of his goodness, and we look out for the able or the wealthy. And again of the wealthy, as if on every side to witness to the same universal law, the man who with no labour of his own has inherited a fortune, ranks higher in the world's esteem than his father who made it. We take rank by descent. Such of us as have the longest pedigree, and are therefore the farthest removed from the first who made the fortune and founded the family, we are the noblest. The nearer to the fountain the fouler the stream; and that first ancestor, who has soiled his fingers by labour, is no better than a parvenu.

And as it is with what we value, so it is with what we blame. It is an old story, that there is no one who would not in his heart prefer being a knave to being a fool; and when we fail in a piece of attempted roguery, as Coleridge has wisely observed, though reasoning unwisely from it, we lay the blame not on our own moral nature, for which we are responsible, but on our

intellectual, for which we are not responsible. We do not say what knaves, we say what fools, we have been; perplexing Coleridge, who regards it as a phenomenon of some deep moral disorder; whereas it is but one more evidence of the universal fact that *gifts* are the true and proper object of appreciation, and as we admire men for possessing gifts, so we blame them for their absence. The noble man is the gifted man; the ignoble is the ungifted; and therefore we have only to state a simple law in simple language to have a full solution of the enigma of Reineke. He has gifts enough: of that, at least, there can be no doubt; and if he lacks the gift to use them in the way which we call good, at least he uses them successfully. His victims are less gifted than he, and therefore less noble; and therefore he has a right to use them as he pleases.

And after all, what are these victims? Among the heaviest charges which were urged against him was the killing and eating of that wretched Scharfenebbe—Sharpbeak—the crow's wife. It is well that there are two sides to every story. A poor weary fox, it seemed, was not to be allowed to enjoy a quiet sleep in the sunshine but what an unclean carrion bird must come down and take a peck at him. We can feel no sympathy with the outcries of the crow husband over the fate of the unfortunate Sharpbeak. Wofully, he says, he flew over the place where, a few moments before, in the glory of glossy plumage, a loving wife sate croaking out her passion for him, and found nothing—nothing but a little blood and a few torn feathers—all else clean gone and utterly abolished. Well, and if it was so, it was a blank prospect for him, but the earth was well rid of her; and for herself, it was a higher fate to be assimilated into the body of a Reineke than to remain in a miserable individuality to be a layer of carrion crows' eggs.

And then for Bellyn, and for Bruin, and for Hintze, and the rest, who would needs be meddling with what was no concern of theirs, what is there in them to

challenge either regret or pity. They made love to their occupation.

> 'Tis dangerous when the baser nature falls
> Between the pass and fell incensed points
> Of mighty opposites :
> They lie not near our conscience :

Ah! if they were all. . . . But there is one misdeed, one which outweighs all others whatsoever—a crime which it is useless to palliate, let our other friend say what he pleased; and Reineke himself felt it so. It sate heavy, *for him*, on his soul, and alone of all the actions of his life we are certain that he wished it undone—the death and eating of that poor foolish Lampe. It was a paltry revenge in Reineke. Lampe had told tales of him; he had complained that Reineke, under pretence of teaching him his lesson, had seized him, and tried to murder him; and though he provoked his fate by thrusting himself, after such a warning, into the jaws of Malepartus, Reineke betrays an uneasiness about it in confession; and, unlike himself, feels it necessary to make some sort of an excuse.

Grimbart had been obliged to speak severely of the seriousness of the offence. "You see," he answers :—

To help oneself out through the world is a queer sort of
business : one can not
Keep, you know, quite altogether as pure as one can in the
cloister.
When we are handling honey we now and then lick at our
fingers.
Lampe sorely provoked me; he frisked about this way and
that way,
Up and down, under my eyes, and he looked so fat and so
jolly,
Really I could not resist it. I entirely forgot how I loved
him.
And then he was so stupid.

But even this acknowledgment does not satisfy Reineke. His mind is evidently softened, and it is

on that occasion that he pours out his pathetic lamentation over the sad condition of the world—so fluent, so musical, so touching, that Grimbart listened with wide eyes, unable, till it had run to the length of a sermon, to collect himself. It is true that at last his office as ghostly confessor obliged him to put in a slight demurrer:—

> Uncle, the badger replied, why these are the sins of your neighbours;
> Yours, I should think, were sufficient, and rather more now to the purpose.

But he sighs to think what a preacher Reineke would have made.

And now, for the present, farewell to Reineke Fuchs, and to the song in which his glory is enshrined—the Welt Bibel, Bible of this world, as Goethe called it, the most exquisite moral satire, as we will call it, which has ever been composed. It is not addressed to a passing mode of folly or of profligacy, but it touches the perennial nature of mankind, laying bare our own sympathies, and tastes, and weaknesses, with as keen and true an edge as when the living world of the old Swabian poet winced under its earliest utterance.

Humorous in the high pure sense, every laugh which it gives may have its echo in a sigh, or may glide into it as excitement subsides into thought; and yet, for those who do not care to find matter there either for thought or sadness, may remain innocently as a laugh.

Too strong for railing, too kindly and loving for the bitterness of irony, the poem is, as the world itself, a book where each man will find what his nature enables him to see, which gives us back each our own image, and teaches us each the lesson which each of us desires to learn.

# THE COMMONPLACE BOOK OF RICHARD HILLES

In the Library at Balliol College, Oxford, there is a manuscript which, for want of a better name, I may call a Commonplace Book of an English gentleman who lived in the beginning of the sixteenth century. Its contents display, beyond any other single volume which I have met with, the mental furniture of an average-educated man of the time. There are stories in prose and verse, collections of proverbs, a dissertation on Horticulture, a dissertation on Farriery, a treatise of Confession, a Book of Education, a Book of Courtesy, a Book of "the Whole Duty" of Man; mercantile entries, discourses of arithmetic, recipes, prescriptions, marvels of science or pseudo-science, conundrums, tables of the assize of food; the laws respecting the sale of meat, bread, beer, wine, and other necessaries; while above and beyond all are a collection in various handwritings of ballads, songs, hymns, and didactic poems of a religious kind, some few of which have been met with elsewhere; but of the greater number of them no other copy, I believe, exists.

The owner and compiler was a certain Richard Hilles. From the entries of the births and deaths of his children on a fly-leaf, I gather that in 1518 he lived at a place called Hillend, near King's Langley, in Hertfordshire. The year following he had removed to London, where he was apparently in business; and among his remarks on the management of vines and fruit trees in his "Discourse on Gardens," he mentions incidentally that he had been in Greece and on the coast of Asia Minor. A brief "Annual Register" is carried down as far as 1535,

in which year he perhaps died. One of his latest entries is the execution of Bishop Fisher and of Sir Thomas More. Some other facts about him might perhaps be collected; but his personal history could add little to the interest of his book, which is its own sufficient recommendation. It will be evident, from the description which I have given, that as an antiquarian curiosity this manuscript is one of the most remarkable of its kind which survives.

The public, who are willing to pay for the production of thousands of volumes annually, the value of which is inappreciable from its littleness, may perhaps not be unwilling to encourage, to the extent of the purchase of a small edition, the preservation in print of a relic which, even in the mere commonplace power of giving amusement, exceeds the majority of circulating novels: while readers whose appetites are more discriminating, and the students of the past, to whom the productions of their ancestors have a memorial value for themselves, may find their taste gratified at least with some fragments of genuine beauty equal to the best extant specimens of early English poetry.

In the hope of contributing to such a result, I am going to offer to the readers of *Fraser* a few miscellaneous selections from different parts of the volume; and as in the original they are thrown together without order—the sacred side by side with the profane; the devotional, the humorous, and the practical reposing in placid juxtaposition—I shall not attempt to remedy a disorder which is itself so characteristic a feature.

Let us commence, then, as a fitting grace before the banquet, with a song on the Nativity. The spirit which appears in many of the most beautiful pictures of mediæval art is here found taking the form of words:—

Can I not sing Ut Hoy,
When the Jolly shepherd made so much joy.

The shepherd upon a hill he sat,
He had on him his tabard and his hat;

His tar-box, his pipe, and his flat hat,
His name was called Jolly, Jolly Wat,
For he was a good herd's boy,
Ut Hoy,
For in his pipe he made so much joy.

The shepherd upon a hill was laid,
His dogge to his girdle was tied;
He had not slept but a little brayd
When *Gloria in Excelsis* to him was said.
Ut Hoy!
For in his pipe he made so much joy.

The shepherd upon a hill he stood,
Round about him his sheep they yode;
He put his hand under his hood,
He saw a star as red as blood,
Ut Hoy!
For in his pipe he made so much joy.

Now Farewell, Matt, and also Will,
For my love go ye all still
Unto I come again you till,
And evermore Will ring well thy bell;
Ut Hoy!
For in his pipe he made so much joy.

Now I must go where Christ was born;
Farewell! I come again to morn:
Dog keep will my sheep from the corn,
And warn well warrock when I blow my horn,
Ut Hoy!
For in his pipe he made so much joy.

When Wat to Bethlehem come was,
He swat: he had gone faster than a pace.
He found Jesu in a simple place,
Between an oxe and an asse;
Ut Hoy!
For in his pipe he made so much joy.

Jesu! I offer to thee here my pipe,
My skirt, my tar-box, and my scrip;
Home to my fellows now will I skippe,
And also look unto my shepe,
Ut Hoy!
For in his pipe he made so much joy.

Now Farewell, myne own Herdsman Watt;
Yea, for God, Lady, and even so I had;
Lull well Jesu in thy lappe,
And farewell, Joseph, with thy gown and cap;
Ut Hoy!
For in his pipe he made so much joy.

Now may I well both hop and sing,
For I have been at Christ's bearing;
Home to my fellows now will I fling,
Christ of Heaven to his bliss us bring.
Ut Hoy!
For in his pipe he made so much joy.

Hilles was perhaps himself a poet, or so I gather from the phrase, "Quoth Richard Hilles," with which more than one piece of great merit terminates. He would scarcely have added his own name to the composition of another person. Elizabeth, queen of Henry VII., died in childbirth in February, 1502–3.

The following "Lamentation," if not written by Hilles himself, was written in his life-time:—

### The Lamentation of Queen Elizabeth

Ye that put your trust and confidence
In worldly riches and frail prosperity,
That so live here as ye should never hence;
Remember death, and look here upon me;
Insample I think there may no better be:
Yourself wot well that in my realm was I
Your Queen but late; Lo, here I lie.

Was I not born of worthy lineage:
Was not my mother Queen, my father King;
Was I not a king's fere in marriage;
Had I not plenty of every pleasant thing?
Merciful God! this is a strange reckoning;
Riches, honour, wealth, and ancestry,
Hath me forsaken; Lo, here I lie.

If worship might have kept me I had not go;
If wealth might have me served I needed not so;
If money might have held I lacked none.
But oh, good God, what vaileth all this year!
When death cometh, thy mighty messenger
Obey we must, there is no remedy;
He hath me summoned—lo, here I lie.

Yet was I lately promised otherwise
This year to live in wealth and in delice,
Lo, whereto cometh the blandishing promise?
Oh, false astrology diminatrice
Of Goddes secrets, making thee so wise!
How true is for this year the prophecy;
The year yet lasteth, and lo, here I lie.

Oh, brittle wealth—aye full of bitterness,
Thy singular pleasure aye doubled is with pain.
Account my sorrow first, and my distress
Sundry wise, and reckon thee again
The joy that I have had, I dare not feign,
For all my honour, endured yet have I
More woe than wealth; Lo, here I lie.

Where are our castles now, and our towers,
Goodly Richmond, soon art thou gone from me;
At Westminster, that goodly work of yours,
Mine own dear lord, now shall I never see.
Almighty God, vouchsafe to grant that ye,
Ye and your children, well may edify,
My place builded is; Lo, here I lie.

Adieu, my true spouse, and my worthy lord;
The faithful love that did us two combine
In marriage and peaceable concord,
Into your hands here do I clean resign,
To be bestowed unto your children and mine;
Erst were ye father, now must ye supply
The mother's part also; Lo, here I lie.

Farewell, my daughter, Lady Margaret,[1]
God wot full sore it grieved hath my mind
That ye should go where we should seldom meet;
Now am I gone and have you left behind.
Oh mortal folk! What be we weary blind!
That we least fear full oft it is full nigh,
Fro you depart I first; Lo, here I lie.

Farewell, madame, my Lordes worthy mother,[2]
Comfort your son and be ye of good cheer.
Take all in worth, for it will be none other.
Farewell my daughter,[3] late the fere
To Prince Arthur mine own child so dear,
It booteth not for me to weep or cry,
Pray for my soul, for now lo here I lie.

Adieu, dear Harry, my lovely son, adieu,
Our Lord increase your honour and your estate
Adieu, my daughter Mary,[4] bright of hue,
God made you virtuous, wise, and fortunate.
Adieu sweetheart, my lady daughter Kate,[5]
Thou shalt, good babe, such is thy destiny,
Thy mother never know; Lo, here I lie.

[1] Margaret of Scotland, Queen of James IV.
[2] The Countess of Richmond.
[3] Catherine of Aragon.
[4] Queen of France, and afterwards Duchess of Suffolk
[5] Died in childhood.

Oh Lady Cecil, Anne, and Catherine,
Farewell my well-beloved sisters three;
Oh Lady bright, dear sister mine;
Lo here the end of worldly vanity;
Lo well are you that earthly folly flee,
And Heavenly things do love and magnify.
Farewell and pray for me; Lo, here I lie.

Adieu my lords and ladies all;
Adieu my faithful servants every one;
Adieu my commons, whom I never shall
See in this world; Wherefore to thee alone,
Immortal God, very three in one,
I me commend—thy Infinite mercy
Show to thy servant now; Lo, here I lie.

---

Here lyeth the fresh flower of Plantagenet;
Here lyeth the White Rose in the red set;
Here lyeth the noble Queen Elizabeth;
Here lyeth the Princess departed by death;
Here lyeth the blood of our country Royal;
Here lyeth the favour of England immortal:
Here lyeth Edward the Fourth in picture;
Here lyeth his daughter and pearle pure:
Here lyeth the wife of Harry our true King;
Here lyeth the heart, the joy, and the gold Ring;
Here lyeth the lady so liberal and gracious;
Here lyeth the pleasure of thy house:
Here lyeth very love of man and child;
Here lyeth ensample our minds to bild:
Here lyeth all beauty—of living a mirrour;
Here lyeth all very good manner and honour;
God grant her now Heaven to increase;
And our King Harry long life and peace.

The note changes. We come next to a hunting song:—

As I walked by a forest side
I met with a forester; he bade me abide
At a place where he me set—

He bade me what time an hart I met
That I should let slip and say go bett;
With Hay go bett, Hay go bett, Hay go bett,
Now we shall have game and sport enow.

I had not stand there but a while,
Yea, not the maintenance of a mile,
But a great hart came running without any guile;
With there he goeth—there he goeth—there he goeth;
Now we shall have game and sport enow.

I had no sooner my hounds let go
But the hart was overthrow;
Then every man began to blow,
With trororo—trororo—trororo,
Now we shall have game and sport enow.

In honour of good ale we have many English ballads. Good wine, too, was not without a poet to sing its praises, the Scripture allusions and the large infusion of Latin pointing perhaps to the refectory of some genial monastery.

### A Treatise of Wine

The best tree if ye take intent,
Inter ligna fructifera,
Is the vine tree by good argument,
Dulcia ferens pondera.

Saint Luke saith in his Gospel,
Arbor fructu noscitur,
The vine beareth wine as I you tell,
Hinc aliis præponitur.

The first that planted the vineyard,
Manet in cœli gaudio,
His name was Noe, as I am learned,
Genesis testimonio

God gave unto him knowledge and wit,
A quo procedunt omnia,
First of the grape-wine for to get,
Propter magna mysteria.

Melchisedek made offering,
Dando liquorem vineum,
Full mightily sacrafying
Altaris sacraficium.

The first miracle that Jesus did,
Erat in vino rubeo,
In Cana of Galilee it betide,
Testante Evangelio.

He changed water into wine,
Aquæ rubescunt hydriæ,
And bade give it to Archetcline,
Ut gustet tunc primarie.

Like as the rose exceedeth all flowers,
Inter cuncta florigera,
So doth wine other liquours,
Dans multa salutifera.

David, the prophet, saith that wine
Lætificat cor hominis,
It maketh men merry if it be fine,
Est ergo digni nominis.

The malicoli fumosetive,
Quæ generat tristitiam,
It causeth from the hĕart to rise
Tollens omnem mœstitiam.

The first chapter specified,
Libri ecclesiastici,
That wine is music of cunning delight,
Lætificat cor clerici.

Sirs, if ye will see Boyce,
De disciplinâ scholarium,
There shall ye see without misse,
Quod vinum acuit ingenium.

First, when Ypocras should dispute,
Cum viris sapientibus,
Good wine before was his pursuit,
Acumen præbens sensibus.

It quickeneth a man's spirit and his mind,
Audaciam dat liquentibus,
If the wine be good and well fined,
Prodest sobrie bibentibus.

Good wine received moderately,
Mox cerebrum lætificat,
Natural heat it strengthens pardy,
Omne membrum fortificat.

Drunken also soberly,
Digestionem uberans,
Health it lengthens of the body,
Naturam humanam prosperans.

Good wine provokes a man to sweat,
Et plena lavat viscera,
It maketh men to eat their meat,
Facitque corda prospera.

It nourisheth age if it be good,
Facit ut esset juvenis,
It gendereth in him gentle blood,
Nam venas purgat sanguinis.

Sirs, by all these causes ye should think,
Quæ sunt rationabiles,
That good wine should be best of all drink,
Inter potus potabiles.

Fill the cup well! Bellamye,
Potum jam mihi ingere,
I have said till my lips be dry,
Vellem nunc vinum bibere.

Wine drinkers all with great honour,
Semper laudate Dominum,
The which sendeth the good liquour,
Propter salutem hominum.

Plenty to all that love good wine,
Donet Deus largius,
And bring them soon when they go hence,
Ubi non sitient amplius.

The boar's-head catch may be added to this, with similar Latin intermixtures.

Caput apri refero,
Resonans laudes Domino,

The boar's head in hand I bring,
With garlands gay and birds singing,
I pray you all help me to sing
Qui estis in convivio.

The boar's head I understand,
Is chief service in all this land,
Wheresoever it may be found,
Servitur cum sinapio.

The boar's head, I dare well say,
Anon after the Twelfth day.
He taketh his leave and goeth away,
Exivit tunc de patriâ.

Four of the following verses are on a tombstone, I believe in Melrose Abbey, and are well known. Few if any persons will have seen the poem of which they

form a part. So far as I am aware no other copy survives [1] :—

Vado mori Rex sum, quid honor quid gloria mundi,
Est vita mors hominum regia—vado mori.
Vado mori miles victo certamine belli,
Mortem non didici vincere vado mori.
Vado mori medicus, medicamine non relevandus,
Quicquid agunt medici respuo vado mori.
Vado mori logicus, aliis concludere novi,
Concludit breviter mors in vado mori.

Earth out of earth is worldly wrought;
Earth hath gotten upon earth a dignity of nought;
Earth upon earth has set all his thought,
How that earth upon earth might be high brought.

Earth upon earth would be a king,
But how that earth shall to earth he thinketh no thing.
When earth biddeth earth his rents home bring,
Then shall earth from earth have a hard parting.

Earth upon earth winneth castles and towers,
Then saith earth unto earth this is all ours;
But when earth upon earth has builded his bowers,
Then shall earth upon earth suffer hard showers.

Earth upon earth hath wealth upon mould;
Earth goeth upon earth glittering all in gold,
Like as he unto earth never turn should,
And yet shall earth unto earth sooner than he would.

Why that earth loveth earth wonder I think,
Or why that earth will for earth sweat and swink.
For when earth upon earth is brought within the brink,
Then shall earth for earth suffer a foul stink.

[1] Since this was written I have learned that a version, with important differences, has been printed for the Warton Club, from an MS. in the possession of Mr. Ormsby Gore.

As earth upon earth were the worthies nine,
And as earth upon earth in honour did shine;
But earth list not to know how they should incline,
And their gowns laid in the earth when death had made his fine.

As earth upon earth full worthy was Joshua,
David, and worthy King Judas Maccabee,
They were but earth none of them three;
And so from earth unto earth they left their dignity.

Alisander was but earth that all the world wan,
And Hector upon earth was held a worthy man,
And Julius Cæsar, that the Empire first began;
And now as earth within earth they lie pale and wan.

Arthur was but earth for all his renown,
No more was King Charles nor Godfrey of Boulogne;
But how earth hath turned their noblenes upside down,
And thus earth goeth to earth by short conclusion.

Whoso reckons also of William Conqueror,
King Henry the First that was of knighthood flower,
Earth hath closed them full straitly in his bower,—
So the end of worthiness,—here is no more succour.

Now ye that live upon earth, both young and old,
Think how ye shall to earth, be ye never so bold;
Ye be unsiker, whether it be in heat or cold,
Like as your brethren did before, as I have told.

Now ye folks that be here ye may not long endure,
But that ye shall turn to earth I do you ensure;
And if ye list of the truth to see a plain figure,
Go to St. Paul's and see the portraiture.

All is earth and shall to earth as it sheweth there,
Therefore ere dreadful death with his dart you dare,
And for to turn into earth no man shall it forbear,
Wisely purvey you before, and thereof have no fear.

Now sith by death we shall all pass, it is to us certain,
For of earth we come all, and to the earth shall turn again;
Therefore to strive or grudge it were but vain,
For all is earth and shall be earth—nothing more certain.

Now earth upon earth consider thou may
How earth cometh to earth naked alway,
Why should earth upon earth go stout alway,
Since earth out of earth shall pass in poor array?

I counsel you upon earth that wickedly have wrought,
That earth out of earth to bliss may be brought.

---

Of songs, nursery rhymes, and carols, there are very many, of which the next three are specimens:—

Lulley, lulley, lulley, lulley,
The falcon hath borne my mate away,
He bare him up, he bare him down,
He bare him into an orchard brown.
Lulley, lulley, lulley, lulley,
The falcon hath borne my mate away.

In that orchard there was a hall,
That was hanged with purple and pall,
And in that hall there was a bed
That was hanged with gold so red,
Lulley, lulley, lulley, lulley.

And in that bed there lyeth a knight,
His wounds were bleeding day and night;
By the bedside there kneeleth a may,
And she weepeth both night and day,
Lulley, lulley, lulley, lulley.

And by the bed side there standeth a stone,
*Corpus Christi* is written thereon.
Lulley, lulley, lulley, lulley,
The falcon hath borne my mate away.

I have twelve oxen, and they be fair and brown,
And they go a grazing down by the town,
With haye, with howe, with hoye!
Sawest thou not mine oxen, thou little pretty boy?

I have twelve oxen, and they be fair and white,
And they go a grazing down by the dyke,
With haye, with howe, with hoye!
Sawest thou not mine oxen, thou little pretty boy?

I have twelve oxen, and they be fair and black,
And they go a grazing down by the lake,
With haye, with howe, with hoye!
Sawest thou not mine oxen, thou little pretty boy?

I have twelve oxen, and they be fair and red,
And they go a grazing down by the mead,
With haye, with howe, with hoye!
Sawest thou not mine oxen, thou pretty little boy?

---

Make we merry in hall and bower,
This time was born our Saviour.

In this time God hath sent
His own Son to be present,
To dwell with us in verament,
God is our Saviour.

In this time that is befal,
A child was born in an ox stall,
And after he died for us all,
God is our Saviour.

In this time an Angel bright
Met three shepherds upon a night,
He bade them go anon of right
To God that is our Saviour.

In this time now pray we
To Him that died for us on tree,
On us all to have pitee,
God is our Saviour.

---

And how exquisitely graceful too is this:—

There is a flower sprung of a tree,
The root of it is called Jesse,
A flower of price,—
There is none such in Paradise.

Of Lily white and Rose of Ryse,
Of Primrose and of Flower-de-Lyse,
Of all flowers in my devyce,
The flower of Jesse beareth the prize,
For most of all
To help our souls both great and small.

I praise the flower of good Jesse,
Of all the flowers that ever shall be,
Uphold the flower of good Jesse,
And worship it for aye beautee;
For best of all
That ever was or ever be shall.

Mr. Hilles was a good Catholic. Amidst a multitude of religious poems of a Catholic kind, there is not one which could be construed as implying a leaning towards the Reformers; while under a certain legend of St. Gregory some indignant Protestant of the next generation has written a passionate anathema calling it lies of the devil and other similar hard names. A private diary of such a person therefore, of the years in which England was separated from the Papacy, is of especial interest:—

"1533. Stephen Peacock, haberdasher, mayor.

"This year, the 29th day of May, the Mayor of London, with the aldermen in scarlet gowns, went in barges to Greenwich, with their banners, as they were

wont to bring the Mayor to Westminister; and the bachelor's barge hanged with cloth of gold on the outside with banners and bells upon them in their best manner, with a galley to wait upon her, and a foyst with a beast therein which shot many guns. And then they fetched Queen Anne up to the Tower of London; and in the way on land about Limehouse there shot many great chambers of guns, and two of the King's ships which lay by Limehouse shot many great guns, and at the Tower or she came on land was shot innumerable many guns.

"And the 31st day of May, which was Whitsun even, she was conveyed in a chariot from the Tower of London to York-place, called Whitehall at Westminster; and at her departing from the Tower there was shot off guns which was innumerable to men's thinking; and in London divers pageants, that is to say,

"One at Gracechurch;
"One at Leadenhall;
"One at the great Conduit;
"One at the Standard;
"The Crosse in Chepe new trimmed;
"At the conduit at Paul's Gate;
"At Paul's gate a branch of Roses;
"Without at the east end of Paul's;
"At the conduit in Fleet Street;

"And she was accompanied, first Frenchmen in —— coloured velvet and one white sleeve, and the horses trapped, and white crosses thereon; then rode gentlemen, then knights and lords in their degree, and there was two hats of maintenance, and many chariots, with lords and many gentlewomen on horseback following the chariots; and all the constables in London were in their best array, with white staves in their hands, to make room and to wait upon the Queen as far as ————; and there rode with her sixteen knights of the Bath; and on Whit-Sunday she was crowned at Westminster with great solemnity; and jousts at Westminster all the Whitsun holidays, and the feast was kept in West-

minster Hall, and jousts afore York Place called Whitehall.

"This year, in the beginning of September, Queen Anne was delivered of a woman child at Greenwich, which child was named Elizabeth.

"Item, this year foreign butchers sold flesh at Leadenhall, for the butchers of the city of London denied to sell beef for a halfpenny the pound according to the Act of Parliament.

"1534. Christopher Ascue, draper, mayor.

"This year, the 23rd day of November, preached at Paul's Cross the Abbot of Hyde, and there stood on a scaffold all the sermon time the Holy Maid of Kent, called [Elizabeth] Barton, and two monks of Canterbury, and two Friars observant, and two priests and two laymen, and after the sermon went to the Tower. Also this year, on Palm Sunday even, which was the 28th day of March, was a great sudden tempest of wind, and broke open two windows at Whitehall at Westminster, and turned up the lead of the King's new Tennis Play at York Place, and broke off the tyles of three goldsmiths' houses in Lombard Street, and folded up the lead at Pewterers' Hall and cast it down into the yard, and blew down many tyles of houses in London, and trees about Shoreditch.

"Item, the first day of April, which was tenebre Wednesday, Wolf and his wife, that killed the two Lombards in a boat upon Thames, were hanged upon two gibbets by the water-side between London Bridge and Westminster; and on the Monday in Easter week the woman was buried at the Crossed Friars in London.

"Item, the 20th day of April, the parson of Aldmary (*sic*, but the real person was the priest of Aldington in Kent) Church, in London, was drawn on a hurdle from the Tower of London to the Tyburn and there hanged and headed. Item, two observant Freers drawn on a hurdle and both hanged and headed. Item, two monks of Canterbury, one was called Dr. Bocking, drawn on a hurdle and hanged and headed. Item, the Holy Maid

of Kent was drawn on a hurdle to Tyburn and hanged and headed; and all the heads set upon London Brigge and on the gates of London. Item, the 11th day of July, the Lord Dacres of the north was conveyed from the Tower of London to Westminster to receive judgement for treason, but there he was quit by a quest of Lords. Item, all men, English and others being in England, were sworn to be true to the King and his heirs between Queen Anne and him begotten and for to be begotten. Item, the Lord Thomas Garrard, of Ireland, beheaded the Bishop of Dublin, called Doctor Allen, as he would come into England. Item, a general peace cried between the King of England and the Scottish King for their lifetime. Item, there was a great sudden storm in the Narrow Sea, and two ships of the Zealand fleet were lost, with cloth and men and all, for they sank in the sea.

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"Sir John Champneys, mayor.

"This year, in November, came over the high Admiral of France as ambassador from the French King, and he had great gifts and his costs provided for as long as he was in the Realm.

"1535. Item, the fourth day of May, the Prior of the Charterhouse in London, and two other monks of the Charterhouse in other places, and the father of the Place at Sion, being in a grey habit, and a priest which was, as men said, the vicar of Thystillworth, were drawn all from the Tower of London to Tyburn and hanged and their bowels burnt, the heads cut off, and quartered, and the heads and quarters some set on London Brigge, and the rest upon all the gates of London and on the Charterhouse gate.

"Also shortly after the King caused his own head to be knotted and cut short, and his hair was not half an inch long, and so were all the lords, and all knights, gentlemen, and serving men that came to the court.

"Item, on Whitsun even was a great thunder in London. Item, the fourth day of June, a man and woman, born in Flanders, were burnt in Smithfield for heresy. Item, the 19th day of June, three monks of the order of the Charterhouse were drawn from the Tower to Tyburn, and there hanged and headed. Item, the 22nd day of June, the Bishop Rochester was beheaded at the Tower Hill, the head set on London Brigg and the body buried at Barking Churchyard. Item, the 6th day of July, Sir Thomas More, that sometime was Chancellor of England, was beheaded at Tower Hill, and his head set on the Brigg and the body buried in the Tower. Also this year the power and authority of the Pope was utterly made frustrate and of none effect within the Realm, and the King called Supreme Head under God of the Church of England; and that was read in the Church every Festival day; and the Pope's name was scraped out of every mass book and other books, and was called Bishop of Rome.

"1535–6. Sir John Allen, mercer, mayor.

"At the beginning of the time the sheriffs put away each of them six servants and six yeomen till they were compelled by the common counsel to take them again.

"Item, the Kennell Rakers of London had horns to blow to give folks warning to cast out their dust. Item, every man that had a well within his house to draw it three times in the week to wash the streets."

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The murder committed by Wolf and his wife, which is mentioned in the Diary, created so much sensation that it was discussed in Parliament, and was made the subject of a statute. The extraordinary beauty of the woman was used as a decoy to entice the merchants into a boat where the husband was concealed. They were killed and thrown overboard, and the wife, acting much like Mrs. Manning, took the keys from the body of one of them, went to his house and rifled his strong box. The burial of her body, while her husband was left upon the gibbet, was occasioned by a circumstance too horrible to be mentioned.

Next "follow parts of the statutes of England how every craftsman victualler shall be ruled":—

"MILLERS.

"First, the assise of the miller is that he have no measure at his mill but it be assised and sealed according to the King's standard, and he to have of every bushel of wheat a quart for the grinding: also, if he fetch it, another quart for the fetching: and of every bushel of malt a pint for the grinding, and if he fetch it another pint for the fetching. Also, that he change nor water no man's corn to give him the worse for the better, nor that he have no hogs, geese, nor ducks, nor no manner poultry but three hens and a duck: and if he do the contrary to any of these points his fine is at every time three shillings and four pence, and if he will not beware by two warnings the third time to be judged to the pillory.

"BAKERS.

"Also, the assise of bakers is sixpence highing and sixpence lowing in the price of a quarter of wheat; for if he lack an ounce in the weight of a farthing loaf he to be amerced at 20*d.*; and if he lack an ounce and a half he to be amerced at 2*s.* 6*d.*, in all bread so baken: and if he bake not after the assise of the statute he to be adjudged to the pillory.

"BREWERS.

"Also, the assise of brewers is 12 pence highing and 12 pence lowing in the price of a quarter of malt, and evermore shilling to farthing; for when he buyeth a quarter malt for two shillings, then he shall sell a gallon of the best ale for two farthings, and so to make 48 gallons of a quarter malt. When he buyeth a quarter malt for three shillings, the gallon three farthings; for four shillings, the gallon four farthings; and so forth to 8 shillings, and no further. And that he set none ale

a sale till he have sent for the ale taster, and as oft as he doth the contrary he to be merced at six pence; and that he sell none but by measure assised and sealed, and that he sell a quart ale upon his table for a farthing. And as oft as he doth the contrary to sell not after the price of malt, he to be amerced the first time 12 pence, the second time 20 pence, the third time three and four pence; and if he will not beware by these warnings, the next time to be judged to the cucking stole, and the next time to the pillory.

"An Ordinance for Bakers.

"By the discretion and ordinance of our lord the King, weights and measures were made. It is to know that an English penny, which is called a round sterling and without clipping shall weigh 32 corns of wheat taken out of the middle of the ear, and twenty pence make an ounce, and twelve ounces make a pound, which is twenty shillings sterling; and eight pounds of wheat maketh a gallon of corn, and eight gallons make a London bushel, which is the eighth part of a quarter.

"When the quarter of wheat is sold for a shilling, then the wastell, well boulted and clean, shall weigh six pounds sixteen shillings. The loaf of a quarter of the same corn and the same bultell shall weigh more than the said wastell two shillings. The symnell of a quarter shall weigh less than the said wastell two shillings, because that it is boyled and clean. The loaf of clean wheat of a quartern shall weigh a coket and a half, and the loaf of all corns of a quartern shall weigh two cokets; and it is understood that the baker so may get of every quarter of wheat as it is proved by the King's bakers four pence and the bran, and two loaves to furnage of the price of two pence; and three servants a penny farthing, and two grooms a farthing; in salt a farthing; in yeast a farthing, in candell and in wood three pence, in bultell allowed a farthing.

"Two or four loaves are made to be sold for a penny: none other kind of bread to be made of great price, but

only two or four loaves to a penny. There is no bread made to be sold of three quarterns nor of five quarterns; also, there shall be no bread made of corn the which shall be worse in breaking than it is without. It is to know that of old custom of the city of London, by authority of divers Parliaments affirmed for divers weights which the citizens of London suffer in the bakers which they have had and have been wont to have in every assise of bread, the setting of two pence in a quarter of wheat above all foreign bakers in the realm of England; so that in assise of wheat when a quarter wheat is sold for five shillings, then it shall be set to the bakers of London seven shillings for assise; and so of every other assise two shillings to the increase.

"The assise of bread after that above contained truly may be holden after the selling of wheat; that is to say, of the best price, of the second price, and of the third, and as well wastell bread as other bread shall be weighed after, of what kind so ever it be, as it is above, by a mean price of wheat; and then the assise or the weight of bread, shall not be changed but by six pence increasing or distressing in the selling of a quarter of wheat. Also, the baker shall be amerced *2s.* 6*d.*, and his quartern bread may be proved faulty in weight; and if he pass the number he shall go to the pillory, and the judgment of the trespass shall not be forgiven for gold nor silver; and every baker must have his own mark on every manner bread; and after eight days bread should not be weighed: and if it be found that the quartern bread of the baker be faulty he shall be amerced 15*d.*, and unto the number of *2s.* 6*d.* And it is to know that the baker ought not to go to the pillory, but if he pass the number of *2s.* 6*d.* default quartern bread, and he shall not be merced, but if the default of bread pass 15*d.*

"*The Rule set upon White Bakers and Brown Bakers.*—The rule is that white bakers should inowe make and bake all manner of bread, and that they can make of wheat: that is for to say, white loaf bread, wastell buns, and all manner white bread that hath been used of old

time; and they inowe make wheat bread sometimes called Crybill bread, and basket bread such as is sold in Cheep to poor people. But the white bread baker shall bake no horse bread of any assise, neither of his own neither of none other men's, to sell. The brown baker shall inowe make and bake wheat bread as it cometh ground from the mill, without any boulting of the same; also horse bread of clean beans and peason; and also bread called household bread, for the which they shall take for every bushel kneading bringing home 1 penny; but they shall bake no white bread of any assise, neither of their own, neither of none other men's, to sell. And what person of the said bakers offend in any of the articles above writ, shall as oft as he may be proved guilty pay 6*s.* 8*d.*, half to the use of the Chamber of London, and the other half to the use of the master of the bakers.

"The Assise of Bread within London.

"*Mem.*—That the farthing loaf of all grains, and the farthing horse loaf, is of like weight.

"*Mem.*—That the halfpenny white loaf of Stratford must weigh two ounces more than the halfpenny white loaf of London.

"That the penny wheat loaf of Stratford must weigh six oz. more than the penny wheat loaf of London.

"The halfpenny wheat loaf of Stratford must weigh three ounces more than the halfpenny wheat loaf of London.

"Three halfpenny white loaves of Stratford must weigh as much as the penny wheat loaf.

"The loaf of all grains: that is, the wheat loaf, must weigh as much as the penny wheat loaf and the halfpenny white loaf.

"The chete white loaf must weigh 12 oz.

"The chete white brown loaf must weigh 18 oz."

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After so much solid matter, our repast shall be completed with something of a lighter kind. A list of

"Divers good proverbs" is curious, as showing the long growth and long endurance of established maxims of practical wisdom. They are written in a distinct and singular hand, not to be traced elsewhere in prose or poetry:—

When ye proffer the pigge open the poke.
Whyle the grasse growyth the hors stervyth.
Sone it sherpyth that thorne wyll be.
It ys a sotyll mouse that slepyth in the cattys ear.
Nede makyth the old wyffe to trotte.
A byrde yn honde ys better than three yn the wode
And hevyn fell we shall have meny larkys.
A short hors ys sone curryed.
Though peper be blek yt hath a gode smek.
Of a rugged colte cumyth a gode hors.
Fayre behestys makyth ffolys fayn.
All thyngs hath a begynyng.
Wepyn makyth pese dyvers tymes.
Wynter etyth that somer getyth.
He that ys warnyd beffore ys not begylyd.
He that wyll not be warnyd by hys owne fader,
He shell be warnyd by hys step fader.
Pryde goeth beffore and shame comyth after.
Oftyn tymys provyth the fruyght affore,
The stok that hyt comyth off.
Hyt ys a febyll tre thet fallyth at the fyrst strok.
Hyt fallyth yn a day that fallyth not all the yere afore.
Whyle the fote warmyth the shoe harmyth.
A softe ffyre makyth swete malte.
When the stede ys stolen shyt the stabyll dore.
Merry hondys makyth lyght werke.
When thou hast well done hange up thy hachet.
Yt ys not all gold that glowyth.
Often tymys the arrow hyttyth the shoter.
Yt ys comonly sayd that all men be not trew.
That nature gevyth no man can tak away.
Thys arrow comyth never owt of thyn ownne bow.
Sone crokyth the tre that crokyed wyll be.
When the hors walowyth some herys be loste.

Thys day a man, to-morrow non.
Seld sene sone forgotyn.
When the bely ys ffull the bonys would have craft.
Better yt ys to be unborn than untawght.
He that no good can nor non wyll lern,
Yf he never thryve, who shall hym werne?
He that all covetyth often all lesyth.
Never hope, herte wold breste.
Hasty man lakkyth never woo.
A gode begynnyng makyth a gode endyng.
Better yt ys late than never.
Poverte partyth felyshype.
Brente honde ffyre dredyth.
Non sygheth so sore as the gloton that may no more.
He may lyghtly swym that ys held up by the chyn.
Clyme not to hye lest chypys fall yn thyn eie.
An skabbyd shepe ynfectyth all the ffolde.
All the keys hange not by one manys gyrdyll.
Better yt ys to lese cloth than brede.
He that hath nede must blowe at the cole.

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Of all the treasures of the volume, the richest are perhaps the hymns and metrical prayers to the Virgin, of which there are great numbers and every variety. Some are in English, some in English and Latin. Here are three in different styles:—

Mary mother, thee I pray.
To be our help at Domys day;

At Domys day when we shall rise,
And come before the high Justice,
And give account for our service,
What helpeth then our clothing gay?

When we shall come before his doom,
What will us help there all and some?
We shall stand as sorry grooms,
Ycald in a full poor array.

That ylke day without lesing,
Many a man his hands shall wring.
And repent him sore for his living,
Then it is too late as I you say.

Therefore I rede ye both day and night,
Make ye ready to God Almight ;
For in this land is king nor knight,
That wot when he shall wend away.

That child that was born on Mary,
He glads all this company,
And for his love make we merry,
That for us died on Good Friday.

---

Mater ora filium,
Ut post hoc exilium,
Nobis donet gaudium
Beatorum omnium.

Faire maiden, who is this bairn
That thou bearest in thine arm ?
Sir, it is a Kingis son,
That in Heaven above doth wonne.
Mater ora filium, etc.

Man to Father he hath none,
But himself God alone ;
Of a maiden he would be borne,
To save mankind that was forlorn.
Mater ora filium, etc.

Three Kings brought him presents,
Gold, myrrh, and frankinsense,
To my Son full of might,
King of Kings and lord of right,
Mater ora filium, etc.

Faire maiden, pray for us
Unto thy Son, sweet Jesus,
That he will send us of his grace
In Heaven on high to have a place.
Mater ora filium, etc.

---

Ave Maria, now say we so,
Maid and mother were never no mo.

Gaude Maria, Christis moder,
Mary mild, of thee I mean,
Thou bare my lord, thou bare my brother,
Thou bare a lovely child and clean,
Thou stoodest full styll withouten blyn
When in thine ear that errand was done.
The gracious Lord thee light within,
Gabrielis nuntio.

Gaude Maria, yglent with grace,
When Jesus, thy Son, on thee was bore,
Full nigh thy breast thou gave him brace,
He sucked, he sighed, he wept full sore;
Thou feedest the flower that never shall fade,
With maiden's milk, and song thereto;
Lulley, my sweet, I bare thee, babe,
Cum pudoris lillio.

Oh, Gaude Maria, thy mirth was away
When Christ on cross thy Son did die
Full dolefully on Good Friday,
That many a mother's son it sye.
His blood us brought from care and strife,
His watery wounds us wisshe from woe.
The third day from death to life
Fulget resurrectio.

Gaude Maria, thou birde so bright,
Brighter than blossom that bloweth on hill,
Joyful thou wert to see that sight,
When the Apostles so smet (*sic*) of will,

All and some did cry full shrill
When the fairest of shape went you fro,
From earth to Heaven he stayed full still,
Motuque fertur proprio.

Gaude Maria, thou rose of ryse,
Maiden and mother, both gentle and free;
Precious princess, peerless of price,
Thy bower is next the Trinity;
Thy Son as lawe asketh a right,
In body and soul thee took him to;
Thou reigned in Heaven like as we find
In cœli palacio.

Now blessed birde, we pray thee abone,
Before thy Son for us thou fall,
And pray him as he was on the rood done,
And for us drank aysell and gall,
That we may wonne within that wall,
Wherever is well withouten woe,
And grant that grace unto us all
In perenni gaudio.

SEQUUNTUR MIRABILIA.

*Ad faciendum unumquemque hominum duo capita.*

Sume sulphur et argentum vivum, et pone ad lumen lampadis, et unusquisque putabit socium suum habere duo capita.

*Ut homo videatur habere duo capita equina.*

Accipe medullam equi, et ceram virgineam, et fac candelam, et accende.

*Ut omnia instrumenta in domo appareant serpentes.*

Recipe serpentem, et coque, et sume pinguedinem ejus, et fac candelam cum aliâ cerâ, et illumina.

*Si vis facere lumen per vim animi.*

Accipe vermes qui lucent de nocte et pone in vase vitreo continente radium solis quousque fiet aqua, et tunc pone illam in lampade, et lucet sicut candela, et probatum est.

*Ut homines ardere appareant.*

Recipe sanguinem leporis, et ceram virgineam, et fac candelam, et illumina.

Item capiatis argentum vivum, et ponatis ipsum in aliquo vitro, et etiam aquam ardentem, et aquam vitæ, et projiciatis tres vel quatuor guttas in igne—si fuerit aliqua mulier corrupta statim debet mingere et non aliter.

"Gossips mine" has been printed from another manuscript by the Percy Society. To most readers of *Fraser*, however, it is likely to be new. I select it from the humorous poems as being capable (which most of them are not) of being printed without omissions. The necessary discretion, it will be seen, has been supplied by the author.

How gossips mine, gossips mine,
When shall we go to the wine.

I shall tell you a good sport,
How gossips gather them of a sort,
Their sick bodies to comfort,
When they meet in land or street.

But I dare not for your displeasure,
Tell of these matters half the substance;
But yet somewhat of their governance,
So far as I dare I will declare.

Good gossip mine, where have ye been;
It is so long sith I you seen.
Where is the best wine, tell you me.
Can ye aught tell? Yea, full well.

I know a draught of merry go down,
The best it is in all the town.
But yet I would not for my gown,
My husband wist. Ye may me trist.

Call forth our gossips, bye-and-bye,
Eleanour, Joan, and Margery,
Margaret, Alice, and Cecily;
For they will come, both all and some.

And each of them will something bring,
Goose or pig, or capon's wing,
Pasties of pigeons, or some such thing.
For we must eat some manner meat.

Go before, between, and tween,
Wisely that ye be not seen;
For I must home and come again.
To wit I wis where my husband is.

A strype or two God might send me,
If my husband might here see me.
She is afeared, let her flee,
Quoth Alice then,—I dread no men.

Now be we in the tavern set,
A draught of the best let him fet,
To bring our husbands out of debt;
For we will spend—till God more send.

Each of them brought forth their dish,
Some brought flesh and some brought fish,
Quoth Margaret meke—now with a wish,
I would Anne were here; she would make us cheer.

How say ye, gossips, is the wine good?
That is it, quoth Eleanour, by the rood.
It cheereth the heart and comforts the blood.
Such jonkets among shall make us live long.

Anne bade fill a pot of muscadell;
For of all wines I love it well.
Sweet wines keep my body in hell.
If I had it not I should take great thought.

How look ye, gossips, at the board's end.
Not merry, gossips? God it amend,
All shall be well, else God it defend,
Be merry and glad, and sit not so sad.

Would God I had done after your counsel;
For my husband is so fell;
He beateth me like the Devil in hell;
And the more I cry the less mercy.

Alice with a loud voice spake then:
I wis, she said, little good he can,
That beateth or striketh any woman,
And specially his wife, God give him short life.

Margaret meek said, so might I thrive;
I know no man that is alive
That give me two strokes, but he shall have five.
I am not afeard though he have a beard.

One cast down her shot, and went away.
Gossip, quoth Eleanour, what did she pay?
Not but a penny! So, therefore, I say
She shall no more be of our lore.

Such guests we may have enow,
That will not for their shot allow.
With whom came she? Gossip, with you?
Nay, quoth Joan: I came alone.

Now reckon our shot, and go we home,
What cometh to each of us but threepence?
Pardye, that is but a small expense
For such a sort, and all but sport.

Turn down the street when ye come out,
And we will compass around about.
Gossip, quoth Anne, what needeth that doubt,
Your husbands be pleased when ye be eased.

Whatsoever any man think,
We come for naught but for good drink.
Now let us go home and wink,
For it may be seen where we have been.

This is the thought that gossips take.
Once in a week merry they will make,
And all small drinks they will forsake;
But wine of the best shall have no rest.

Some be at the tavern thrice in the week,
And so be some every day eke,
Or else they will groan and make them seek,
For things used will not be refused.

We have thrown our net almost at random; yet there are few palates which will not have found something to please them among the specimens which we have brought together. Let us repeat our hope that the entire collection may before long be committed to the more secure custody, as well as the more accessible form, of a printed volume.

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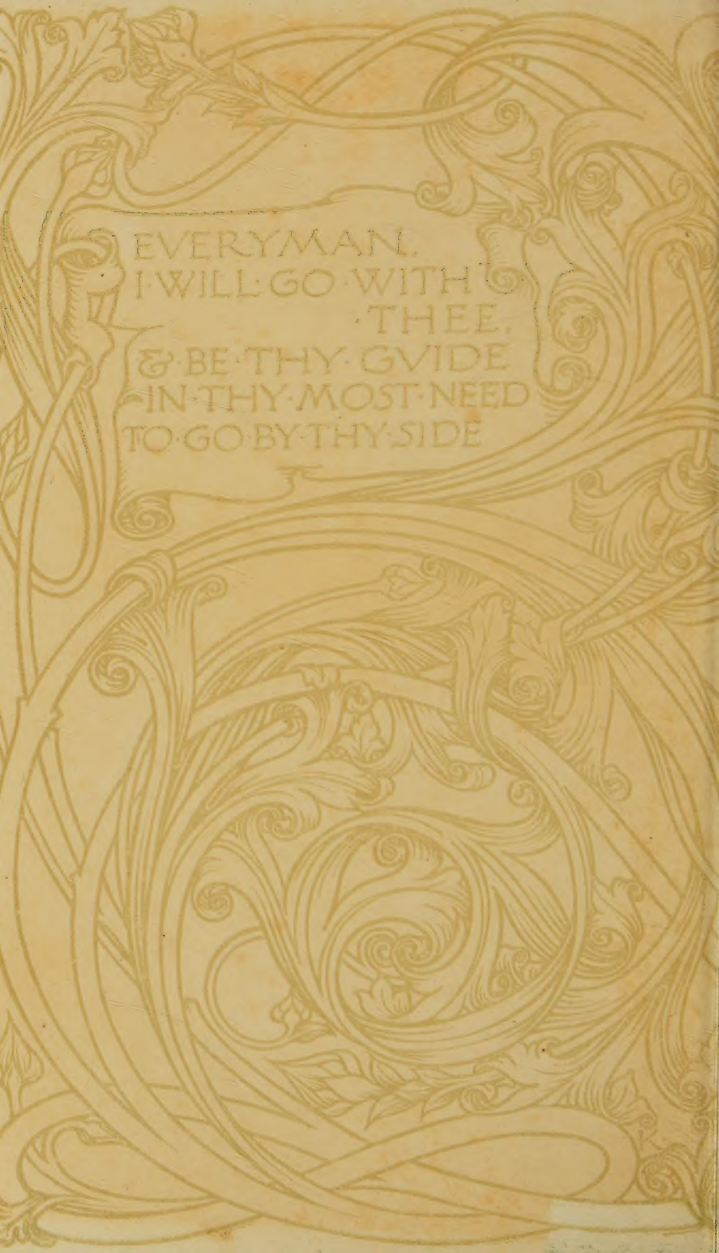
EVERYMAN.
I WILL GO WITH
THEE,
& BE THY GVIDE
IN THY MOST NEED
TO GO BY THY SIDE

L. DAWSON,
Printer and Stationer